SHERWOOD

ALFRED NOYES

SCHOOL AND
ACTING EDITION

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SHERWOOD

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OR

ROBIN HOOD AND THE THREE KINGS

A Play in Five Acts

BY

ALFRED NOYES

SCHOOL AND ACTING EDITION
WITH DIRECTIONS FOR PRODUCTION
BY
MILNOR DOREY

NEW YORK
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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

Robin	Earl of Huntingdon, known as "Robin Hood."
Little John	Outlaws and followers of "Robin Hood."
Friar Tuck	
Will Scarlet	
Reynold Greenleaf	
Much, the Miller's Son	
Alan-a-Dale	
Prince John.	
King Richard, Cœur de Lion.	
Blondel	King Richard's minstrel.
Oberon	King of the Fairies.
Titania	Queen of the Fairies.
Puck	A Fairy.
The Sheriff of Nottingham.	
Fitzwalter	Father of Marian, known as "Maid Marian."
Shadow-of-a-Leaf	A Fool.
Arthur Plantagenet	Nephew to Prince John, a boy of about ten years of age.
Queen Elinor	Mother of Prince John and Richard Lion-Heart.
Marian Fitzwalter	Known as Maid Marian, betrothed to Robin Hood.
Jenny	Maid to Marian.
Widow Scarlet	Mother of Will Scarlet.
Prioress of Kirklee.	

Fairies, merry men, serfs, peasants, mercenaries, an abbot, a baron, a novice, nuns, courtiers, soldiers, retainers, etc.

ACT I

SHERWOOD

ACT I

SCENE I. *Night. The borders of the forest.* [*The smouldering embers of a Saxon homestead.*] *The* SHERIFF *and his men are struggling with a* SERF.

SERF

No, no, not that! not that! If you should blind me
God will repay you. Kill me out of hand!
[*Enter* PRINCE JOHN *and several of his retainers.*]

JOHN

Who is this night-jar?
[*The retainers laugh.*]
Surely, master Sheriff,
You should have cut its tongue out, first. [Its cries
Tingle so hideously across the wood
They'll wake the King in Palestine.] Small wonder
That Robin Hood evades you.

SHERIFF

[*To the* SERF]
Silence, dog,
Know you not better than to make this clamour
Before Prince John?

SERF

Prince John! It is Prince John!
For God's love save me, sir!

JOHN

Whose thrall is he?

NOTE — Passages to be omitted in acting are indicated by heavy brackets.

SHERIFF

I know not, sir, but he was caught red-handed
Killing the king's deer. By the forest law
He should of rights be blinded; for, as you see,
[*He indicates the* SERF'S *right hand.*]
'Tis not his first deer at King Richard's cost.

JOHN

'Twill save you trouble if you say at mine.

[SHERIFF

Ay, sir, I pray your pardon — at *your* cost!
His right hand lacks the thumb and arrow-finger,
And though he vows it was a falling tree
That crushed them, you may trust your Sheriff, sir,
It was the law that clipped them when he last
Hunted your deer.]

SERF

Prince, when the Conqueror came,
They burned my father's homestead with the rest
To make the King a broader hunting-ground.
I have hunted there for food. How could I bear
To hear my hungry children crying? Prince,
They'll make good bowmen for your wars, one day.

JOHN

He is much too fond of "Prince": he'll never live
To see a king. Whose thrall? — his iron collar,
Look, is the name not on it?

SHERIFF

Sir, the name
Is filed away, and in another hour
The ring would have been broken. He is one of those
Green adders of the moon, night-creeping thieves
Whom Huntingdon has tempted to the woods.

[These desperate ruffians flee their lawful masters
And flock around the disaffected Earl
Like ragged rooks around an elm, by scores!
And now, i' faith, the sun of Huntingdon
Is setting fast. They've well nigh beggared him,
Eaten him out of house and home. They say
That, when we make him outlaw, we shall find
Nought to distrain upon, but empty cupboards.]

JOHN

Did you not serve him once yourself?

SHERIFF

Oh, ay,
He was more prosperous then. But now my cupboards
Are full, and his are bare. [Well, I'd think scorn
To share a crust with outcast churls and thieves,
Doffing his dignity, letting them call him
Robin, or Robin Hood, as if an Earl
Were just a plain man, which he will be soon,
When we have served our writ of outlawry!]
'Tis said he hopes much from the King's return
And swears by Lion-Heart; and though King Richard
Is brother to yourself, 'tis all the more
Ungracious, sir, to hope he should return,
And overset your rule. [But then — to keep
Such base communications! Myself would think it
Unworthy of my sheriffship, much more
Unworthy a right Earl.]

JOHN

[You talk too much!
This whippet, here, slinks at his heel, you say.
Mercy may close her eyes, then.] Take him off,
Blind him or what you will; and let him thank
His master for it. But wait — perhaps he knows

Where we may trap this young patrician thief.
Where is your master?

SERF

Where you'll never find him.

JOHN

Oh, ho! the dog is faithful! Take him away.
Get your red business done. I shall require
Your men to ride with me.

SHERIFF

[*To his men.*]

Take him out yonder,
A bow-shot into the wood, so that his clamour
Do not offend my lord. Delay no time,
The irons are hot by this. They'll give you light
Enough to blind him by.

SERF

[*Crying out and struggling as he is forced back into the forest.*]

No, no, not that!
God will repay you! Kill me out of hand!

SHERIFF

[*To* PRINCE JOHN.]

[There is a kind of justice in all this.
The irons being heated in that fire, my lord,
Which was his hut, aforetime.
[*Some of the men take the glowing irons from the fire and follow into the wood.*]

There's no need
To parley with him, either. The snares are laid
For Robin Hood. He goes this very night
To his betrothal feast.

JOHN

Betrothal feast!

SHERIFF

At old Fitzwalter's castle, sir.

JOHN

That's good!
There will be one more guest there than he thought!
Ourselves are riding thither. We intended
My Lady Marian for a happier fate
Than bride to Robin Hood. Your plans are laid
To capture him?

SHERIFF

[*Consequentially.*]

It was our purpose, sir,
To serve the writ of outlawry upon him
And capture him as he came forth.

JOHN

That's well.
Then — let him disappear — you understand?

SHERIFF

I have your warrant, sir? Death? A great Earl?

JOHN

Why, first declare him outlawed at his feast!
'Twill gladden the tremulous heart of old Fitzwalter
With his prospective son-in-law; and then —
No man will overmuch concern himself
Whither an outlaw goes. You understand?

SHERIFF

It shall be done, sir.

JOHN

But the Lady Marian!
By heaven, I'll take her. I'll banish old Fitzwalter
If he prevent my will in this. You'll bring
How many men to ring the castle round?

SHERIFF

A good five score of bowmen.

JOHN

Then I'll take her
This very night as hostage for Fitzwalter,
Since he consorts with outlaws. These grey rats
Will gnaw my kingdom's heart out. For 'tis mine,
This England, now or later. They that hold
By Richard, as their absent king, would make
My rule a usurpation. God, am I
My brother's keeper?

[*There is a cry in the forest from the* SERF, *who immediately afterwards appears at the edge of the glade, shaking himself free from his guards. He seizes a weapon and rushes at* PRINCE JOHN. *One of the retainers runs him through and he falls at the* PRINCE'S *feet.*]

JOHN

That's a happy answer!

SHERIFF

[*Stooping over the body.*]

He is dead.

JOHN

I am sorry. It were better sport
To send him groping like a hoodman blind
Through Sherwood, whimpering for his Robin. Come,

I'll ride with you to this betrothal feast.
Now for my Lady Marian!
[*Exeunt all. A pause. The scene darkens. Shadowy figures creep out from the thickets, of old men, women and children.*]

FIRST OLD MAN

[*Stretching his arms up to Heaven.*]

God, am I
My brother's keeper? Witness, God in heaven,
He said it and not we — Cain's word, he said it!

FIRST WOMAN

[*Kneeling by the body.*]

O Father, Father, and the blood of Abel
Cries to thee!

A BLIND MAN

[Is there any light here still?
I feel a hot breath on my face. The dark
Is better for us all.] I am sometimes glad
They blinded me those many years ago.
Princes are princes; and God made the world
For one or two it seems. Well, I am glad
I cannot see His world.

FIRST WOMAN

[*Still by the body and whispering to the others.*]

Keep him away.
'Tis as we thought. The dead man is his son.
Keep him away, poor soul. He need not know.
[*Some of the men carry the body among the thickets.*]

A CHILD

[Mother,] I'm hungry, I'm hungry!

[FIRST OLD MAN

There's no food
For any of us to-night. The snares are empty,
And I can try no more.]

A BLIND MAN

Wait till my son
Comes back. He's a rare hunter is my boy.
You need not fret, [poor little one.] My son
Is much too quick and clever for the Sheriff.
He'll bring you something good. [Why, ha! ha! ha!
Friends, I've a thought — the Sheriff's lit the fire
Ready for us to roast our meat. Come, come,
Let us be merry while we may! My boy
Will soon come back with food for the old folks.
The fire burns brightly, eh?

SECOND OLD MAN

The fire that feeds
On hope and eats our hearts away. They've burnt
Everything, everything!]

THE BLIND MAN

[Ah, princes are princes!]
But when the King comes home from the Crusade,
We shall have better times.

FIRST OLD MAN

Ay, when the King
Comes home from the Crusade.

[CHILD

Mother, I'm hungry.]

SECOND WOMAN

Oh, but if I could only find a crust

Left by the dogs. Masters, [the child will starve.]
We must have food.

THE BLIND MAN

I tell you when my boy
Comes back, we shall have plenty!

FIRST WOMAN

God pity thee!

THE BLIND MAN

What dost thou mean?

[SECOND WOMAN

Masters, the child will starve.]

FIRST OLD MAN

Hist, who comes here — a forester?

THE BLIND MAN

We'd best
Slip back into the dark.

FIRST WOMAN

[*Excitedly.*]

No, stay! All's well.
There's Shadow-of-a-Leaf, good Lady Marian's fool,
Beside him!

THE BLIND MAN

Ah, they say there's fairy blood
In Shadow-of-a-Leaf. But I've no hopes of more
From him, than wild bees' honey-bags.

[*Enter* LITTLE JOHN, *a giant figure, leading a donkey, laden with a sack. On the other side,* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *trips, a slender figure in green trunk-hose and doublet. He is tickling the donkey's ears with a long fern.*]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Gee! Whoa!
Neddy, my boy, have you forgot the Weaver,
And how Titania tickled your long ears?
Ha! ha! Don't ferns remind you?

LITTLE JOHN

Friends, my master
Hath sent me to you, fearing ye might hunger.

FIRST OLD MAN

Thy master?

LITTLE JOHN

Robin Hood.

SECOND WOMAN

[*Falling on her knees.*]

God bless his name.
God bless the kindly name of Robin Hood.

LITTLE JOHN

[*Giving them food.*]

'Tis well nigh all that's left him; and to-night
He goes to his betrothal feast.

[*All the outcasts except the first old man exeunt.*]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*Pointing to the donkey.*]

Now look,
There's nothing but that shadow of a cross
On his grey back to tell you of the palms
That once were strewn before my Lord, the King.
[Won't ferns, won't branching ferns, do just as well?
There's only a dream to ride my donkey now!]
But, Neddy, I'll lead you home and cry — HOSANNA!
We'll thread the glad Gate Beautiful again,

Though now there's only a Fool to hold your bridle
And only moonlit ferns to strew your path,
And the great King is fighting for a grave
In lands beyond the sea. Come, Neddy, come,
Hosanna!
[*Exit* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *with the donkey. He strews ferns before it as he goes.*]

FIRST OLD MAN

'Tis a strange creature, master! Thinkest
There's fairy blood in him?

LITTLE JOHN

'Twas he that brought
Word of your plight to Robin Hood. He flits
Like Moonshine thro' the forest. [He'll be home
Before I know it. I must be hastening back.
This makes a sad betrothal night.]

FIRST OLD MAN

That minds me,
Couched in the thicket yonder, we overheard
The Sheriff tell Prince John . . .

LITTLE JOHN

Prince John!

FIRST OLD MAN

You'd best
Warn Robin Hood. They're laying a trap for him.
Ay! Now I mind me of it! I heard 'em say
They'd take him at the castle.

LITTLE JOHN

To-night?

FIRST OLD MAN

To-night!
Fly, lad, for God's dear love. Warn Robin Hood!
Fly like the wind, [or you'll be there too late.
And yet you'd best be careful.] There's five score
In ambush round the castle.

LITTLE JOHN

I'll be there
An if I have to break five hundred heads!
[*He rushes off thro' the forest. The old man goes into the thicket after the others. The scene darkens. A soft light, as of the moon, appears between the ferns to the right of the glade, showing* OBERON *and* TITANIA.]

TITANIA

Yet one night more the gates of fairyland
Are opened by a mortal's kindly deed.

OBERON

Last night the gates were shut, and I heard weeping!
Men, women, children, beat upon the gates
That guard our happy world. [They could not sleep.
Titania, must not that be terrible,
When mortals cannot sleep?]

TITANIA

Yet one night more
Dear Robin Hood has opened the gates wide
And their poor weary souls can enter in.

OBERON

Yet one night more we woodland elves may steal
Out thro' the gates. [I fear the time will come
When they must close for ever; and we no more
Shall hold our Sherwood revels.]

TITANIA

Only love
And love's kind sacrifice can open them.
For when a mortal hurts himself to help
Another, then he thrusts the gates wide open
Between his world and ours.

OBERON

Ay, but that's rare,
That kind of love, Titania, for the gates
Are almost always closed.

TITANIA

Yet one night more!
Hark, how the fairy host begins to sing
Within the gates. Wait here and we shall see
What weary souls by grace of Robin Hood
This night shall enter Dreamland. See, they come!
[*The soft light deepens in the hollow among the ferns and the ivory gates of Dreamland are seen swinging open. The fairy host is heard, singing to invite the mortals to enter.*]

[*Song of the fairies.*]

The Forest shall conquer! The Forest shall conquer!
The Forest shall conquer!
Your world is growing old;
But a Princess sleeps in the greenwood,
Whose hair is brighter than gold.

The Forest shall conquer! The Forest shall conquer!
The Forest shall conquer!
O hearts that bleed and burn,
Her lips are redder than roses,
Who sleeps in the faëry fern.

The Forest shall conquer! The Forest shall conquer!
The Forest shall conquer!
By the Beauty that wakes anew
Milk white with the fragrant hawthorn
In the drip of the dawn-red dew.

The Forest shall conquer! The Forest shall conquer!
The Forest shall conquer!
O hearts that are weary of pain,
Come back to your home in Faërie
And wait till she wakes again.

[[*The victims of the forest-laws steal out of the thicket once more — dark, distorted, lame, blind, serfs with iron collars round their necks, old men, women and children; and as the fairy song breaks into chorus they pass in procession thro' the beautiful gates. The gates slowly close. The fairy song is heard as dying away in the distance.*]

TITANIA

[*Coming out into the glade and holding up her hands to the evening star beyond the tree-tops.*]

Shine, shine, dear star of Love, yet one night more.]

SCENE II. *A banqueting hall in* FITZWALTER'S *castle. The guests are assembling for the betrothal feast of* ROBIN *and* MARIAN. *Some of* ROBIN HOOD'S *men, clad in Lincoln green, are just arriving at the doors.* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *runs forward to greet them.*

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Come in, my scraps of Lincoln green; come in,
My slips of greenwood. You're much wanted here!
Head, heart and eyes, we are all pent up in walls
Of stone — nothing but walls, on every side —
And not a rose to break them — big blind walls,
[Neat smooth stone walls! Come in, my ragged robins;]
Come in, my jolly minions of the moon,
My straggling hazel-boughs! Hey, bully friar,
Come in, my knotted oak! Ho, little Much,
Come in, my sweet green linnet. [Come, my cushats,
Larks, yellow-hammers, fern-owls, Oh, come in,
Come in, my Dian's foresters, and drown us
With may, with blossoming may!]

FITZWALTER

Out, Shadow-of-a-Leaf!
Welcome, welcome, good friends of Huntingdon,
Or Robin Hood, by whatsoever name
You best may love him.

CRIES

Robin! Robin! Robin!

[*Enter* ROBIN HOOD.]

FITZWALTER

Robin, so be it! Myself I am right glad

To call him at this bright betrothal feast
My son.
[*Lays a hand on* ROBIN'S *shoulder.*]
Yet, though I would not cast a cloud
Across our happy gathering, you'll forgive
An old man and a father if he sees
All your glad faces thro' a summer mist
Of sadness.

ROBIN

Sadness? Yes, I understand.

FITZWALTER

No, Robin, no, you cannot understand.

ROBIN

Where's Marian?

FITZWALTER

Ay, that's all you think of, boy.
But I must say a word to all of you
Before she comes.

ROBIN

Why — what? . . .

FITZWALTER

No need to look
So startled; but it is no secret here;
[For many of you are sharers of his wild
Adventures. Now I hoped an end had come
To these, until another rumour reached me,
This very day, of yet another prank.]
You know, you know, how perilous a road
My Marian must ride if Huntingdon
Tramples the forest-laws beneath his heel
And, in the thin disguise of Robin Hood,
Succours the Saxon outlaws, makes his house
A refuge for them, lavishes his wealth
To feed their sick and needy.

[*The* SHERIFF *and two of his men appear in the great doorway out of sight of the guests.*]

SHERIFF

[*Whispering.*]

Not yet! keep back!
One of you go — see that the guards are set!
He must not slip us.

FITZWALTER

Oh, I know his heart
Is gold, but this is not an age of gold;
And those who have must keep, or lose the power
Even to help themselves. No — he must doff
His green disguise of Robin Hood for ever,
And wear his natural coat of Huntingdon.

ROBIN

Ah, which is the disguise? Day after day
We rise and put our social armour on,
A different mask for every friend; but steel
Always to case our hearts. We are all so wrapped,
So swathed, so muffled in habitual thought
That now I swear we do not know our souls
Or bodies from their winding-sheets; but Custom,
Custom, the great god Custom, all day long
Shovels the dirt upon us where we lie
Buried alive and dreaming that we stand
Upright and royal. Sir, I have great doubts
About this world, doubts if we have the right
To sit down here for this betrothal feast
And gorge ourselves with plenty, when we know
That for the scraps and crumbs which we let fall
And never miss, children would kiss our hands
And women weep in gratitude. [Suppose
A man fell wounded at your gates, you'd not
Pass on and smile and leave him there to die.

And can a few short miles of distance blind you?
Miles, nay, a furlong is enough to close
The gates of mercy. Must we thrust our hands
Into the wounds before we can believe?
Oh, is our sight so thick and gross? We came,
We saw, we conquered with the Conqueror.
We gave ourselves broad lands;] and when our king
Desired a wider hunting ground we set
Hundreds of Saxon homes a-blaze and tossed
Women and children back into the fire
If they but wrung their hands against our will.
And so we made our forest, and its leaves
Were pitiful, more pitiful than man.
[They gave our homeless victims the same refuge
And happy hiding place they give the birds
And foxes. Then we made our forest-laws,
And he that dared to hunt, even for food,
Even on the ground where we had burned his hut,
The ground we had drenched with his own kindred's blood,
Poor foolish churl, why, we put out his eyes
With red-hot irons, cut off both his hands,
Torture him with such horrors that . . . Christ God,]
How can I help but fight against it all?

[SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Ah, gossips, if the Conqueror had but burned
Everything with four walls, hut, castle, palace,
And turned the whole wide world into a forest,
Drenched us with may, we might be happy then!
With sweet blue wood-smoke curling thro' the boughs,
And just a pigeon's flap to break the silence,
And ferns, of course, there's much to make men happy.
Well, well, the forest conquers at the last!
I saw a thistle in the castle courtyard,
A purple thistle breaking thro' the pavement,
Yesterday; and it's wonderful how soon
Some creepers pick these old grey walls to pieces.

These nunneries and these monasteries now,
They don't spring up like flowers, so I suppose
Old mother Nature wins the race at last.]

FITZWALTER

Robin, my heart is with you, but I know
A hundred ages will not change this earth.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*With a candle in his hand.*]

Gossip, suppose the sun goes out like this.
Pouf!

[*Blows it out.*]

Stranger things have happened

FITZWALTER

Silence, fool! . . .
So, if you share your wealth with all the world
Earth will be none the better, and my poor girl
Will suffer for it. Where you got the gold
You have already lavished on the poor
Heaven knows.

FRIAR TUCK

Oh, by the mass and the sweet moon
Of Sherwood, so do I? That's none so hard
A riddle!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Ah, Friar Tuck, we know, we know!
Under the hawthorn bough, and at the foot
Of rainbows, that's where fairies hide their gold.
[Cut me a silver penny out of the moon
Next time you're there.

[*Whispers.*]

Now tell me, have you brought
Your quarter-staff?

FRIAR TUCK

[*Whispering.*]
Hush! hush.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Oh, mum's the word!
I see it!]

FITZWALTER

Believe me, Robin, there's one way
And only one — patience! When Lion-Heart
Comes home from the Crusade, he will not brook
This blot upon our chivalry. Prince John
Is dangerous to a heart like yours. Beware
Of rousing him. Meanwhile, your troth holds good;
But till the King comes home from the Crusade
You must not claim your bride.

ROBIN

So be it, then. . . .
When the great King comes home from the Crusade! . . .

FITZWALTER

Meanwhile for Marian's sake and mine, I pray
Do nothing rash.
[*Enter* WIDOW SCARLET. *She goes up to* ROBIN HOOD.]

WIDOW SCARLET

Are you that Robin Hood
They call the poor man's friend?

ROBIN

I am.

WIDOW SCARLET

They told me,
They told me I should find you here. They told me!

ROBIN

Come, mother, what's the trouble?

WIDOW SCARLET

Sir, my son
Will Scarlet lies in gaol at Nottingham
For killing deer in Sherwood! Sir, they'll hang him.
He only wanted food for him and me!
[They'll kill him, I tell you, they'll kill him. I can't help
Crying it out. He's all I have, all! Save him!
I'll pray for you, I'll . . .]

ROBIN

[*To* FITZWALTER, *as he raises* WIDOW SCARLET *gently to her feet.*]

Sir, has not the King
Come home from the Crusade? Does not your heart
Fling open wide its gates to welcome him?

FITZWALTER

Robin, you set me riddles. Follow your conscience.
Do what seems best.

ROBIN

I hope there is a way,
Mother. I knew Will Scarlet. Better heart
There never beat beneath a leather jerkin.
[He loved the forest and the forest loves him;]
And if the lads that wear the forest's livery
Of living green should happen to break out
And save Will Scarlet [as on my soul I swear,
Mother, they shall!] why, that's a matter none
Shall answer for to prince, or king, or God,
But you and Robin Hood; [and if the judgment
Strike harder upon us than the heavenly smile

Of sunshine thro' the greenwood, may it fall
Upon my head alone.]

[*Enter the* SHERIFF, *with two of his men.*]

SHERIFF

[*Reads.*]

In the King's name!

Thou, Earl of Huntingdon, by virtue of this writ are hereby attained and deprived of thine earldom, thy lands and all thy goods and chattels whatsoever and whereas thou hast at divers times trespassed against the officers of the king by force of arms, thou art hereby outlawed and banished the realm.

ROBIN

That's well.

[*He laughs.*]

It puts an end to the great question
Of how I shall dispose my wealth, Fitzwalter.
But "banished"? — No! [that is beyond their power
While I have power to breathe, unless they banish
The kind old oaks of Sherwood. They may call it
"Outlawed," perhaps.]

FITZWALTER

Who let the villain in
Thro' doors of mine?

CRIES

Out with him! Out with him!

[*The guests draw swords and the* SHERIFF *retreats thro' the doorway with his men.*]

ROBIN

Stop!
Put up your swords! He had his work to do.

[WIDOW SCARLET *falls sobbing at his feet.*]

WIDOW SCARLET

O master, master, who will save my son,
My son?

ROBIN

[*Raising her.*]

Why, mother, this is but a dream,
This poor fantastic strutting show of law!
And you shall wake with us in Sherwood Forest
And find Will Scarlet in your arms again.
Come, cheerly, cheerly, we shall overcome
All this. Hark!

[*A bugle sounds in the distance. There is a scuffle in the doorway and* LITTLE JOHN *bursts in with his head bleeding.*]

LITTLE JOHN

Master, master, come away!
They are setting a trap for thee, drawing their lines
All round the castle.

ROBIN

How now, Little John,
They have wounded thee! Art hurt?

LITTLE JOHN

No, no, that's nothing.
Only a bloody cockscomb. Come, be swift,
[Or, if thou wert a fox, thou'dst never slip
Between 'em.] Ah, hear that?

[*Another bugle sounds from another direction.*]

That's number two.
Two sides cut off already. When the third
Sounds — they will have thee, sure as eggs is eggs.
Prince John is there, Fitzwalter cannot save 'ee.
They'll burn the castle down.

ROBIN

Prince John is there?

LITTLE JOHN

Ay, and my lord Fitzwalter had best look
Well to my mistress Marian, if these ears
Heard right as I came creeping thro' their lines.
[Look well to her, my lord, look well to her.]
Come, master, come, for God's sake, come away.

FITZWALTER

Robin, this is thy rashness. I warned thee, boy!
Prince John! Nay, that's too perilous a jest
For even a prince to play with me. Come, Robin,
You must away and quickly.

ROBIN

Let me have
One word with Marian.

LITTLE JOHN

It would be the last
On earth. Come, if you ever wish to see
Her face again.

FITZWALTER

Come, Robin, are you mad?
You'll bring us all to ruin!
[*He opens a little door in the wall.*]
The secret passage,
This brings you out by Much the Miller's wheel,
Thro' an otter's burrow in the river bank.
[Come, quick, or you'll destroy us! Take this lanthorn.]
If you're in danger, slip into the stream
And let it carry you down into the heart
Of Sherwood. Come now, quickly, you must go!

ROBIN

The old cave, lads, in Sherwood, you know where
To find me. [Friar Tuck, bring Widow Scarlet
Thither to-morrow, with a word or two
From Lady Marian!]

FITZWALTER

Quickly, quickly, go.
[*He pushes* ROBIN *and* LITTLE JOHN *into the opening and shuts the door. A pause.*]
Oh, I shall pay for this, this cursed folly!
Henceforth I swear I wash my hands of him!
[*Enter* MARIAN, *from a door on the right above the banqueting hall. She pauses, pale and frightened, on the broad steps leading down.*]

MARIAN

Father, where's Robin?

FITZWALTER

Child, I bade you stay
Until I called you.

MARIAN

Something frightened me!
Father, where's Robin? Where's Robin?

FITZWALTER

Hush, Marian, hark!
[*All stand listening.*]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*Stealing to the foot of the stairs and whispering to* LADY MARIAN.]
Lady, they're all so silent now. I'll tell you
I had a dream last night — there was a man

That bled to death, because of four grey walls
And a black-hooded nun.

FITZWALTER

[*Angrily.*]

Hist, Shadow-of-a-Leaf!

[*The third bugle sounds. There is a clamour at the doors. Enter* PRINCE JOHN *and his retainers.*]

JOHN

[*Mockingly.*]

Now this is fortunate! I come in time
To see — Oh, what a picture! Lady Marian,
Forgive me — coming suddenly out of the dark
And seeing you there, robed in that dazzling white
Above these verdant gentlemen, I feel
Like one that greets the gracious evening star
Thro' a gap in a great wood.
Is aught amiss?
Why are you all so silent? Ah, my good,
My brave Fitzwalter, I most fervently
Trust I am not inopportune.

FITZWALTER

My lord,
I am glad that you can jest. I am sadly grieved
And sorely disappointed in that youth
Who has incurred your own displeasure.

JOHN

Ah?
Your future son-in-law?

FITZWALTER

Never on earth!
He is outlawed—

MARIAN

Outlawed!

FITZWALTER

And I wash my hands
Of Huntingdon. His shadow shall not darken
My doors again!

JOHN

That's vehement! Ha! ha!
And what does Lady Marian say?

MARIAN

My father
Speaks hastily. I am not so unworthy.

FITZWALTER

Unworthy?

MARIAN

Yes, unworthy as to desert him
Because he is in trouble — the bravest man
In England since the days of Hereward.
You know why he is outlawed!

FITZWALTER

[*To* PRINCE JOHN.]

Sir, she speaks
As the spoilt child of her old father's dotage.
Give her no heed. She shall not meet with him
On earth again, and till she promise this,
She'll sun herself within the castle garden
And never cross the draw-bridge.

MARIAN

Then I'll swim
The moat!

FRIAR TUCK

Ha! ha! well spoken.

MARIAN

Oh, you forget,
Father, you quite forget there is a King;
And, when the King comes home from the Crusade,
Will you forget Prince John and change once more?
[*Murmurs of assent from the* FORESTERS.]

JOHN

Enough of this.
Though I be prince, I am vice-gerent too!
Fitzwalter, I would have some private talk
With you and Lady Marian. Bid your guests
Remove a little —

FITZWALTER

I'll lead them all within!
And let them make what cheer they may. Come, friends.
[*He leads them up the stairs to the inner room.*]
My lord, I shall return immediately!
[*Exeunt* FITZWALTER *and the guests.*]

JOHN

Marian!

MARIAN

My lord!

JOHN

[*Drawing close to her.*]
I have come to urge a plea
On your behalf as well as on my own!
Listen, you may not know it — I must tell you.
I have watched your beauty growing like a flower,
With — why should I not say it — worship; yes,
Marian, I will not hide it.

MARIAN

Sir, you are mad!
[Sir, and your bride, your bride, not three months wedded!
You cannot mean . . .

JOHN

Listen to me! Ah, Marian,
You'd be more merciful if you knew all!
D'you think that princes wed to please themselves?]

MARIAN

Sir, [English maidens do; and] I am plighted
Not to a prince, but to an outlawed man.

JOHN

Listen to me! One word! Marian, one word!
[I never meant you harm! Indeed, what harm
Could come of this?] Is not your father poor?
I'd make him rich! Is not your lover outlawed?
I'd save him from the certain death that waits him.
You say the forest-laws afflict your soul
And his — you say you'd die for their repeal!
Well — I'll repeal them. All the churls in England
Shall bless your name and mix it in their prayers
With heaven itself.

MARIAN

The price?

JOHN

You call it that!
To let me lay the world before your feet,
[To let me take this little hand in mine.
Why should I hide my love from you?]

MARIAN

No more,
I'll hear no more! You are a prince, you say?

JOHN

One word — suppose it some small sacrifice,
To save those churls for whom you say your heart
Bleeds; yet you will not lift your little finger
To save them! [And what hinders you? — A breath,
A dream, a golden rule! Can you not break it
For a much greater end?]

MARIAN

I'd die to save them.

JOHN

Then live to save them.

MARIAN

No, you will not let me;
D'you think that bartering my soul will help
To save another? [If there's no way but this,
Then through my lips those suffering hundreds cry,
We choose the suffering.] All that is good in them,
All you have left, all you have not destroyed,
Cries out against you: and I'll go to them,
Suffer and toil and love and die with them
Rather than touch your hand. [You over-rate
Your power to hurt our souls. You are mistaken!
There is a golden rule!]

JOHN

And with such lips
You take to preaching! I was a fool to worry
Your soul with reason. With hair like yours — it's hopeless!
But Marian — you shall hear me.

[*He catches her in his arms.*]

[Yes, by God,]

Marian, you shall! [I love you.]

MARIAN

[*Struggling.*]

You should not live!

[JOHN

One kiss, then! Devil take it.]

[*Enter* FITZWALTER *above.*]

MARIAN

[*Wresting herself free.*]

You should not live!

Were I a man and not a helpless girl
You should not live!

JOHN

Come, now, that's very wicked.
See how these murderous words affright your father.
My good Fitzwalter, [there's no need to look
So ghastly. For your sake and hers and mine]
I have been trying to make your girl forget
The name of Huntingdon. A few short months
At our gay court would blot his memory out!
I promise her a life of dazzling pleasures,
And, in return she flies at me — a tigress —
Clamouring for my blood! Try to persuade her!

FITZWALTER

My lord, you are very good. She must decide
Herself.

JOHN

[*Angrily.*]

I'll not be trifled with! I hold
The hand of friendship out and you evade it.

[The moment I am gone, back comes your outlaw.]
You say you have no power with your own child!
Well, then I'll take her back this very night;
Back to the court with me. How do I know
What treasons you are hatching here? I'll take her
As hostage for yourself.

FITZWALTER

My lord, you jest!
I have sworn to you.

JOHN

No more! If you be loyal,
What cause have you to fear?

FITZWALTER

My lord, I'll give
A hundred other pledges; but not this.

JOHN

By heaven, will you dictate your terms to me?
I say that she shall come back to the court
This very night! Ho, there, my men.
[*Enter* JOHN'S *retainers.*]
Escort
This lady back with us.

FITZWALTER

Back there, keep back. Prince or no prince,
I say she shall not go!
[*He draws his sword.*]
I'd rather see her
Begging in rags with outlawed Huntingdon
Than that one finger of yours should soil her glove.

JOHN

So here's an end of fawning, here's the truth,

My old white-bearded hypocrite. Come, take her,
Waste no more time. [Let not the old fool daunt you
With that great skewer.]

FITZWALTER

[*As* JOHN'S *men advance.*]

[By God, since you will have it,]
Since you will drive me to my last resort,
Break down my walls, and hound me to the forest,
This is the truth! Out of my gates! Ho, help!
A Robin Hood! A Robin Hood!

[*There is a clamour from the upper room. The doors are flung open and the* FORESTERS *appear at the head of the steps.*]

FRIAR TUCK

[*Coming down into the hall and brandishing his quarter-staff.*]

A Robin?
Who calls on Robin Hood? His men are here
To answer.

FITZWALTER

Drive these villains out of my gates.

FRIAR TUCK

[*To* PRINCE JOHN.]

Sir, I perceive you are a man of wisdom,
So let me counsel you. There's not a lad
Up yonder, but at four-score yards can shoot
A swallow on the wing. They have drunken deep.
I cannot answer but their hands might loose
Their shafts before they know it. Now shall I give
The word? Ready, my lads!

[*The* FORESTERS *make ready to shoot.* JOHN *hesitates for a moment.*]

JOHN

My Lady Marian,
One word, and then I'll take my leave of you!
[*She pays no heed.*]
Farewell, then! I have five-score men at hand!
[And they shall be but lightning to the hell
Of my revenge, Fitzwalter. I will not leave
One stone upon another.] From this night's work
Shall God Himself not save you.
[*Exeunt* JOHN *and his men.*]

FRIAR TUCK

[*As they go out.*]
My Lord Fitzwalter!
I have confessed him! Shall I bid 'em shoot?
'Twill save a world of trouble.

FITZWALTER

No; or the King
Himself will come against me. Follow them out,
Drive them out of my gates, then raise the drawbridge
And let none cross. Oh, I foresaw, foretold!
Robin has wrecked us all!
[*Exeunt the* FORESTERS *and* FITZWALTER. SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *remains alone with* MARIAN.]

MARIAN

[*She flings herself down on a couch and buries her head in her arms.*]
O Robin, Robin,
I cannot lose you now!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*Sitting at her feet. The lights grow dim.*]
[Ah, well, the prince
Promised to break the walls down. Don't you think
These villains are a sort of ploughshare, lady,

And where they plough, who knows what wheat may
spring!
The lights are burning low and very low;
So,] Lady Marian, let me tell my dream.
There was a forester that bled to death
Because of four grey walls and a black nun
Whose face I could not see — but, oh, beware!
Though I am but your fool, your Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
Dancing before the wild winds of the future,
[I feel them thrilling through my tattered wits
Long ere your wisdom feels them. My poor brain
Is like a harp hung in a willow-tree
Swept by the winds of fate.] I am but a fool,
But oh, beware of that black-hooded nun.

MARIAN

This is no time for jesting, Shadow-of-a-Leaf.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

The lights are burning low. Do you not feel
A cold breath on your face?

MARIAN

Fling back that shutter!
Look out and tell me what is happening.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*Flinging back the shutter.*]

[Look,
Look, gossip, how the moon comes dancing in.]
Ah, they have driven Prince John across the drawbridge.
They are raising it, now!
[*There are cries in the distance, then a heavy sound of chains clanking and silence.* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *turns from the window and stands in the stream of moonlight, pointing to the door on the left.*]
Look! Look!

MARIAN

[*Starting up with a cry of fear.*]

Ah!

[*The tall figure of a nun glides into the moonlit hall and throwing back her hood reveals the face of* QUEEN ELINOR.]

ELINOR

Lady Marian,
Tell me quickly, where is Huntingdon hiding?

MARIAN

The Queen!

ELINOR

Yes! Yes! I donned this uncouth garb
To pass through your besiegers. If Prince John
Discover it, all is lost. Come, tell me quickly,
Where is Robin?

[MARIAN

Escaped, I hope.

ELINOR

Not here?

MARIAN

No!

ELINOR

Come, dear Lady Marian, do not doubt me.
I am here to save you both.

MARIAN

He is not here.]

ELINOR

[Ah, but] you know where I may find him, Marian.
[All will be lost if you delay to tell me
Where I may speak with him.] He is in peril.

By dawn Prince John will have five hundred men
Beleaguering the castle. [You are all ruined
Unless you trust me! Armies will scour the woods
To hunt him down.] Even now he may be wounded,
[Helpless to save himself.]

MARIAN

Wounded!

ELINOR

Dear child,
Take me to him. Here, on this holy cross,
My mother's dying gift, I swear to you
I wish to save him.

MARIAN

Oh, but how?

ELINOR

Trust me!

MARIAN

Wounded! He may be wounded! Oh, if I could,
I'd go to him! I am helpless, prisoned here.
My father . . .

ELINOR

I alone can save your father.
Give me your word that if I can persuade him,
You'll lead me to your lover's hiding place,
And let me speak with him.
[*Enter* FITZWALTER.]
Ah, my Lord Fitzwalter!

FITZWALTER

The queen! [O madam, madam, I am driven
Beyond myself.] This girl, this foolish girl

Has brought us all to ruin. This Huntingdon,
As I foresaw, foresaw, foretold, foretold,
Has dragged me down with him.

ELINOR

I am on your side,
If you will hear me; and you yet may gain
A son in Robin Hood.

FITZWALTER

Madam, I swear
I have done with him. [I pray you do not jest;]
But if you'll use your power to save my lands . . .
I was provoked! . . .
[Prince John required this child here —

ELINOR

Oh, I know!
But you'll forgive him that! I do not wonder
That loveliness like hers —]

FITZWALTER

[Ay, but you'll pardon
A father's natural anger. Madam, I swear
I was indeed provoked.] But you'll assure him
I've washed my hands of Huntingdon.

MARIAN

And yet
His men are, even now, guarding your walls!
Father, you cannot, you shall not —

FITZWALTER

Oh, be silent!
[Who wrapt me in this tangle?] Are you bent
On driving me out in my old age to seek
Shelter in caves and woods?

ELINOR

My good Fitzwalter,
It has not come to that! If you will trust me
All will be well; but I must speak a word
With Robin Hood.

FITZWALTER

You!

ELINOR

Oh, I have a reason.
Your daughter knows his hiding place.

FITZWALTER

She knows!

ELINOR

Oh, trust them both for that. [I am risking much!
To-morrow she shall guide me there. This bird
Being flown,] trust me to make your peace with John.

FITZWALTER

But — Marian!

ELINOR

She'll be safer far with Robin,
Than loitering here until your roof-tree burns.
[I think you know it.] Fitzwalter, I can save you,
I swear it on this cross.

FITZWALTER

But — Marian! Marian!

ELINOR

Your castle wrapt in flame! . . .
There's nought to fear,
If she could — Marian, once, at a court masque,
You wore a page's dress of Lincoln green,

[And a green hood that muffled half your face,
I could have sworn 'twas Robin come again —
He was my page, you know —]
Wear it to-morrow — go, child, bid your maid
Make ready — we'll set out betimes.

MARIAN

[*Going up to her father.*]
I'll go,
If you will let me, father. He may be wounded!
Father, forgive me. Let me go to him.

ELINOR

Go, child, first do my bidding. He'll consent
When you return.

[*Exit* MARIAN.]
My dear good friend Fitzwalter,
Trust me, I have some power with Huntingdon.
All shall be as you wish. I'll let her guide me,
But — as for her — she shall not even see him
Unless you wish. Trust me to wind them all
Around my little finger.

FITZWALTER

[It is dark here.
Let us within.] Madam, I think you are right.
And you'll persuade Prince John?

ELINOR

[*As they go up the steps.*]
I swear by this,
This holy cross, my mother's dying gift!

FITZWALTER

It's very sure he'd burn the castle down.

[*Exeunt.*]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*Coming out into the moonlight and staring up after them.*]

The nun! The nun! They'll whip me if I speak,
For I am only Shadow-of-a-Leaf, the Fool.

[*Curtain.*]

ACT II

ACT II

SCENE I. *Sherwood Forest: An open glade, showing on the right the mouth of the outlaw's cave. It is about sunset. The giant figure of* LITTLE JOHN *comes out of the cave, singing.*

LITTLE JOHN

[*Sings.*]

When Spring comes back to England
And crowns her brows with may,
Round the merry moonlit world
She goes the greenwood way.

[*He stops and calls in stentorian tones.*]

Much! Much! Much! [Where has he vanished now,]
Where has that monstrous giant the miller's son
Hidden himself?

[*Enter* MUCH, *a dwarf-like figure, carrying a large bundle of ferns.*]

MUCH

Hush, hush, child, here I am!
And here's our fairy feather-beds, ha! ha!
[Come, praise me, praise me, for a thoughtful parent.]
There's nothing makes a better bed than ferns
Either for sleeping sound or rosy dreams.

LITTLE JOHN

Take care the fern-seed that the fairies use
Get not among thy yellow locks, my Titan,
Or thou'lt wake up invisible. There's none
Too much of Much already.

MUCH

[*Looking up at him impudently.*]
It would take
Our big barn full of fern-seed, I misdoubt,
To make thee walk invisible, Little John,
[My sweet Tom Thumb! And, in this troublous age
Of forest-laws, if we night-walking minions,
We gentlemen of the moon, could only hunt
Invisible, there's many and many of us
With thumbs lopped off, eyes gutted and legs pruned,
Slick, like poor pollarded pear-trees, would be lying
Happy and whole this day beneath the boughs.]

LITTLE JOHN

Invisible? Ay, but what would Jenny say
To such a ghostly midge as thou would'st be
Sipping invisibly at her cherry lips.

MUCH

Why, there now, that's a teaser. [E'en as it is
(Don't joke about it)] my poor Jenny takes
The smallness of her Much sorely to heart!
And though I often tell her half a loaf
(Ground in our mill) is better than no bread,
She weeps, poor thing, that an impartial heaven
Bestows on her so small a crumb of bliss
As me! You'd scarce believe, now, half the nostrums,
[Possets and strangely nasty herbal juices]
That girl has made me gulp, in the vain hope
That I, the frog, should swell to an ox like thee.
[I tell her it's all in vain, and she still cheats
Her fancy and swears I've grown well nigh three feet
Already. O Lord, she's desperate. She'll advance
Right inward to the sources of creation,
She'll take the reins of the world in hand. She'll stop
The sun like Joshua, turn the moon to blood,

And if I have to swallow half the herbs
In Sherwood, I shall stalk a giant yet,
Shoulder to shoulder with thee, Little John,
And crack thy head at quarter-staff. But don't,]
Don't joke about it. 'Tis a serious matter.

LITTLE JOHN

Into the cave, then, with thy feather-bed.
Old Much, thy father, waits thee there to make
A table of green turfs for Robin Hood.
We shall have guests anon, [O merry times,
Baron and Knight and abbot, all that ride
Through Sherwood, all shall come and dine with him
When they have paid their toll! Old Much is there
Growling at thy delay.]

MUCH

[*Going towards the cave.*]
O, my poor father.
Now, there's a sad thing, too. He's so ashamed
Of his descendants. Why for some nine years
He shut his eyes whenever he looked at me;
[And I have seen him on the village green
Pretend to a stranger, once, who badgered him
With curious questions, that I was the son
Of poor old Gaffer Bramble, the lame sexton.
That self-same afternoon, up comes old Bramble
White hair a-blaze and big red waggling nose
All shaking with the palsy; bangs our door
Clean off its hinges with his crab-tree crutch,
And stands there — framed — against the sunset sky!
He stretches out one quivering fore-finger
At father, like the great Destroying Angel
In the stained window: straight, the milk boiled over,
The cat ran, baby squalled and mother screeched.
Old Bramble asks my father — what — what — what

He meant — he meant — he meant! You should have seen
My father's hopeless face! Lord, how he blushed,
Red as a beet-root! Lord, Lord, how he blushed!]
'Tis a hard business when a parent looks
Askance upon his offspring.
[*Exit into the cave.*]

LITTLE JOHN

Skip, you chatterer!
Here comes our master.
[*Enter* ROBIN HOOD.]
Master, where hast thou been?
I feared some harm had come to thee. What's this?
This was a cloth-yard shaft that tore thy coat!

ROBIN

Oh, ay, they barked my shoulder, devil take them.
I got it on the borders of the wood.
St. Nicholas, my lad, they're on the watch.

LITTLE JOHN

What didst thou there? They're on the watch, i' faith!
A squirrel could not pass them. Why, my namesake
Prince John would sell his soul to get thy head,
And both his ears for Lady Marian;
[And whether his ears or soul be worth the more,
I know not. When the first lark flittered up
To sing, at dawn, I woke; and thou wast gone.
What didst thou there?]

ROBIN

Well, first I went to swim
In the deep pool below the mill.

LITTLE JOHN

I swam
Enough last night to last me many a day.
What then?

ROBIN

[I could not wash away the thought
Of all you told me. If Prince John should dare!
That helpless girl! No, no, I will not think it.]
Why, Little John, I went and tried to shoot
A grey goose wing thro' Lady Marian's casement.

LITTLE JOHN

Oh, ay, and a pink nosegay tied beneath it.
Now, master, you'll forgive your Little John,—
But that's a midsummer madness [and the may
Is only half in flower as yet.] But why —
You are wounded — why are you so pale?

ROBIN

No — no —
Not wounded; but oh, my good faithful friend,
She is not there! I wished to send her warning.
I could not creep much closer; but I swear
I think the castle is in the hands of John.
I saw some men upon the battlements,
Not hers — I know — not hers!

LITTLE JOHN

Hist, who comes here?
[*He seizes his bow and stands ready to shoot.*]

ROBIN

Stop, man, it is the fool. Thank God, the fool,
Shadow-of-a-Leaf, my Marian's dainty fool.
How now, good fool, what news? What news?
[*Enter* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF.]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Good fool!
Should I be bad, sir, if I chanced to bring
No news at all? That is the wise man's way.
Thank heaven, I've lost my wits. I am but a leaf
Dancing upon the wild winds of the world,
A prophet blown before them. [Well, this evening,
It is that lovely grey wind from the West
That silvers all the fields and all the seas,
And I'm the herald of May!]

ROBIN

Come, Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
I pray thee, do not jest.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

I do not jest.
I am vaunt-courier to a gentleman,
A sweet slim page in Lincoln green who comes,
Wood-knife on hip, and wild rose in his face,
With golden news of Marian. [Oh, his news
Is one crammed honeycomb, swelling with sweetness
In twenty thousand cells; but delicate!]
So send thy man aside.

ROBIN

Go, Little John.
[LITTLE JOHN *goes into the cave.*]
Well, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, where is he?

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

At this moment
His hair is tangled in a rose bush: hark,
He swears, like a young leopard! Nay, he is free.

Come, master page, here is that thief of love,
Give him your message. I'll to Little John.
[*Exit into the cave. Enter* MARIAN, *as a page in Lincoln green her face muffled in a hood.*]

ROBIN

Good even, master page, what is thy news
Of Lady Marian?
[*She stands silent.*]
Answer me quickly, come,
Hide not thy face!
[*She still stands muffled and silent.*]
Come, boy, the fool is chartered,
Not thou; and I'll break off this hazel switch
And make thee dance if thou not answer me.
What? Silent still? Sirrah, this hazel wand
Shall lace thee till thou tingle, top to toe.
I'll . . .

MARIAN

[*Unmuffling.*]
Robin!

ROBIN

[*Catches her in his arms with a cry.*]
Marian! Marian!

MARIAN

Fie upon you,
Robin, you did not know me.

ROBIN

[*Embracing her.*]
Oh, you seemed
Ten thousand miles away. This is not moonlight,
And I am not Endymion. Could I dream
My Dian would come wandering through the fern

Before the sunset? [Even that rose your face
You muffled in its own green leaves.]

MARIAN

But you,
Were hidden in the heart of Sherwood, Robin,
[Hidden behind a million mighty boughs,]
And yet I found you.

ROBIN

Ay, the young moon stole
In pity down to her poor shepherd boy;
[But he could never climb the fleecy clouds
Up to her throne, never could print one kiss
On her immortal lips. He lay asleep
Among the poppies and the crags of Latmos,
And she came down to him, his queen stole down.]

MARIAN

Oh, Robin, first a rose and then a moon,
[A rose that breaks at a breath and falls to your feet,]
The fickle moon — Oh, hide me from the world;
[For there they say love goes by the same law!
Let me be outlawed then. I cannot change.]
Sweetheart, sweetheart, Prince John will hunt me down!
Prince John — Queen Elinor will hunt me down!

ROBIN

Queen Elinor! Nay, but tell me what this means?
How came you here?

MARIAN

The Queen — she came last night,
[Made it an odious kind of praise to me
That he, not three months wedded to his bride,
Should — pah!

And then] she said five hundred men
Were watching round the borders of the wood;
But she herself would take me safely through them,
Said that I should be safer here with Robin,
She had your name so pat — and I gave way.
[*Enter* QUEEN ELINOR *behind. She conceals herself to listen.*]

ROBIN

Marian, she might have trapped you to Prince John.

MARIAN

No; no; I think she wanted me to guide her
Here to your hiding place. She wished to see you
Herself, unknown to John, I know not why.
[It was my only way. Her skilful tongue
Quite won my father over, made him think,
Poor father, clinging to his lands again,
He yet might save them. And so, without ado
(It will be greatly to the joy of Much,
Your funny little man),] I bade my maid
Jenny, go pack her small belongings up
This morning, and to follow with Friar Tuck
And Widow Scarlet. They'll be here anon.

ROBIN

Where did you leave the Queen?

MARIAN

Robin, she tried
To kill me! We were deep within the wood
And she began to tell me a wild tale,
Saying that I reminded her of days
When Robin was her page, and how you came
To Court, a breath of April in her life,
And how you worshipped her, and how she grew
To love you. But she saw you loved me best

[(So would she mix her gall and lies with honey),]
So she would let you go. And then she tried
To turn my heart against you, bade me think
Of all the perils of your outlawry,
Then flamed with anger when she found my heart
Steadfast; and when I told her we drew nigh
The cave, she bade me wait and let her come
First, here, to speak with you. [Some devil's trick
Gleamed in her smile, the way some women have
Of smiling with their lips, wreathing the skin
In pleasant ripples, laughing with their teeth,
While the cold eyes watch, cruel as a snake's
That fascinates a bird.] I'd not obey her.
She whipped a dagger out. Had it not been
For Shadow-of-a-Leaf, who dogged us all the way,
Poor faithful fool, and leapt out at her hand,
She would have killed me. Then she darted away
Like a wild thing into the woods, trying to find
Your hiding place most like.

ROBIN

O Marian, why,
Why did you trust her? Listen, who comes here?
[*Enter* FRIAR TUCK, JENNY *and* WIDOW SCARLET.]
Ah, Friar Tuck!

MARIAN

Good Jenny!

ROBIN

And Widow Scarlet!

FRIAR TUCK

O children, children, this is thirsty weather!
The heads I have cracked, the ribs I have thwacked, the bones
I have bashed with my good quarter-staff, to bring
These bits of womankind through Sherwood Forest.

ROBIN

What, was there scuffling, friar?

FRIAR TUCK

Some two or three
Pounced on us, ha! ha! ha!

JENNY

A score at least,
Mistress, [most unchaste ruffians.]

FRIAR TUCK

They've gone home,
Well chastened by the Church. This pastoral staff
Mine oaken *Pax Vobiscum,* sent 'em home
[To think about their sins, with watering eyes.
You never saw a bunch of such blue faces,
Bumpy and juicy as a bunch of grapes
Bruised in a Bacchanalian orgy, dripping
The reddest wine a man could wish to see.]

ROBIN

I picture it — those big brown hands of thine
[Grape-gathering at their throttles, ha! ha! ha!]
Come, Widow Scarlet, come, look not so sad.

WIDOW SCARLET

O master, master, they have named the day
For killing of my boy.

ROBIN

They have named the day
For setting of him free, then, my good dame.
Be not afraid. We shall be there, eh, Friar?
[Grape-gathering, eh?]

FRIAR TUCK

Thou'lt not be there thyself
My son, the game's too dangerous now, methinks.

ROBIN

I shall be there myself. The game's too good
To lose. We'll all be there. You're not afraid,
Marian, to spend a few short hours alone
Here in the woods with Jenny.

MARIAN

Not for myself,
Robin.

ROBIN

We shall want every hand that day,
And you'll be safe enough. You know we go
Disguised as gaping yokels, old blind men,
With patches on their eyes, poor wandering beggars,
[Pedlars with pins and poking-sticks to sell;]
And when the time is come — a merry blast
Rings out upon a bugle and suddenly
The Sheriff is aware that Sherwood Forest
Has thrust its green boughs up beneath his feet.
Off go the cloaks and all is Lincoln green,
[Great thwacking clubs and twanging bows of yew.
Oh, we break up like nature thro' the laws
Of that dark world; and then, good Widow Scarlet,
Back to the cave we come and your good Will
Winds his big arm about you once again.]
Go, Friar, take her in and make her cosy.
Jenny, your Much will grow three feet at least
With joy to welcome you. He is in the cave.
[FRIAR TUCK *and* WIDOW SCARLET *go towards the cave.*]

FRIAR TUCK

Now for a good bowse at a drinking can.

I've got one cooling in the cave, unless
That rascal, Little John, has drunk it all.
[*Exeunt into cave.*]

JENNY

[*To* MARIAN.]
Mistress, I haven't spoke a word to you
For nigh three hours. 'Tis most unkind, I think.

MARIAN

Go, little tyrant, and be kind to Much.

JENNY

Mistress, it isn't Much I want. Don't think
Jenny comes trapesing through these awful woods
For Much. I haven't spoke a word with you
For nigh three hours. 'Tis most unkind, I think.

MARIAN

Wait, Jenny, then, I'll come and talk with you.
Robin, she is a tyrant; but she loves me.
[And if I do not go, she'll pout and sulk
Three days on end. But she's a wondrous girl.
She'd work until she dropped for me. 'Poor Jenny!]

ROBIN

[That's a quaint tyranny.] Go, dear Marian, go;
But not for long. We have so much to say.
Come quickly back.
[*Exit* MARIAN. ROBIN *paces thoughtfully across the glade.* QUEEN ELINOR *steals out of her hiding place and stands before him.*]
You here!

ELINOR

Robin, can you
Believe that girl? Am I so treacherous?

ROBIN

It seems you have heard whate'er I had to say.

ELINOR

Surely you cannot quite forget those days
When you were kind to me. Do you remember
The sunset through that oriel?

ROBIN

Ay, a god
Grinning thro' a horse-collar at a pitiful page,
Dazed with the first red gleam of what he thought
Life, as the trouveres find it! I am ashamed,
Remembering how your quick tears blinded me!

ELINOR

Ashamed! You — you — that in my bitter grief
When Rosamund —

ROBIN

I know! I thought your woes,
Those tawdry relics of your treacheries,
Wrongs quite unparalleled. I would have fought
Roland himself to prove you spotless then.

ELINOR

Oh, you speak thus to me! Robin, beware!
I have come to you, I have trampled on my pride,
Set all on this one cast! If you should now
Reject me, humble me to the dust before
That girl, beware! I never forget, I warn you;
I never forgive.

ROBIN

Are you so proud of that?

ELINOR

Ah, well, forgive me, Robin. I'll save you yet
From all these troubles of your outlawry!
Trust me — for I can wind my poor Prince John
Around my little finger. Who knows — [with me
To help you — there are but my two sons' lives
That greatly hinder it] — why, yourself might reign
Upon the throne of England.

ROBIN

Are you so wrapped
In treacheries, helplessly false, even to yourself,
That now you do not know falsehood from truth,
Darkness from light?

ELINOR

O Robin, I was true
At least to you. If I were false to others,
At least I —

ROBIN

No — not that — [that sickening plea
Of truth in treachery.] Treachery cannot live
With truth. The soul wherein they are wedded dies
Of leprosy.

ELINOR

[*Coming closer to him.*]
Have you no pity, Robin,
No kinder word than this for the poor creature
That crept — Ah, feel my heart, feel how it beats!
No pity?

[ROBIN

Five years ago this might have moved me!

ELINOR

No pity?]

ROBIN

None. There is no more to say.
My men shall guide you safely through the wood.

ELINOR

I never forgive!
[*Enter* MARIAN *from the cave; she stands silent and startled.*]

ROBIN

My men shall guide you back.
[*Calls.*]
Ho, there, my lads!
[*Enter several of the* OUTLAWS.]
This lady needs a guide
Back thro' the wood.

ELINOR

Good-bye, then, Robin, and good-bye to you,
Sweet mistress! You have wronged me! What of that?
For — when we meet — Come, lead on, foresters!
[*Exeunt the* QUEEN *and her guides.*]

MARIAN

O Robin, Robin, how the clouds begin
To gather — how that woman seems to have brought
A nightmare on these woods.

ROBIN

Forget it all!
She is so tangled in those lies the world
Draws round some men and women, none can help her.
[Marian, for God's sake, let us quite forget
That nightmare! Oh, that perfect brow of yours,
Those perfect eyes, pure as the violet wells
That only mirror heaven and are not dimmed

Except by clouds that drift thro' heaven and catch
God's glory in the sunset and the dawn.]

MARIAN

[It is enough for them simply to speak
The love they hold for you.] But — I still fear.
Robin — think you — she might have overheard
Your plan — the rescue of Will Scarlet?

ROBIN

Why —
No — No — some time had passed, [and yet — she seemed
To have heard your charge against her! No, she guessed
it.]
Come — let us brush these cobwebs from our minds,
[Look how the first white star begins to tremble
Like a big blossom in that sycamore.]
Now you shall hear our forest ritual.
Ho, Little John! Summon the lads together!
[*The* OUTLAWS *come out of the cave.* LITTLE JOHN *blows a bugle and others come in from the forest.*]
Friar, read us the rules.

FRIAR TUCK

First, shall no man
Presume to call our Robin Hood or any
By name of Earl, lord, baron, knight or squire,
But simply by their names as men and brothers:
Second, that Lady Marian while she shares
Our outlaw life in Sherwood shall be called
Simply Maid Marian. Thirdly, we that follow
Robin, shall never in thought or word or deed
Do harm to widow, wife or maid; [but hold,
Each, for his mother's or sister's or sweetheart's sake,
The glory of womanhood, a sacred thing,
A star twixt earth and heaven.] Fourth, whomsoever
Ye meet in Sherwood ye shall bring to dine

With Robin, [saving carriers, posts and folk
That ride with food to serve the market towns
Or any, indeed, that serve their fellow men.]
Fifth, you shall never do the poor man wrong,
Nor spare a priest or usurer. You shall take
The waste wealth of the rich to help the poor,
[The baron's gold to stock the widow's cupboard,]
The naked ye shall clothe, the hungry feed,
And lastly shall defend with all your power
All that are trampled under by the world,
The old, the sick and all men in distress.

ROBIN

So, if it be no dream, we shall at last
Hasten the kingdom of God's will on earth.
There shall be no more talk of rich and poor,
Norman and Saxon. We shall be one people,
One family, clustering all with happy hands
And faces round that glowing hearth, the sun.
Now let the bugle sound a golden challenge
To the great world. Greenleaf, a forest call!

[Reynold Greenleaf *blows a resounding call.*]

Now let the guards be set; and then, to sleep!
To-morrow there'll be work enough for all.
The hut for Jenny and Maid Marian!
Come, you shall see how what we lack in halls
We find in bowers. Look how from every branch
Such tapestries as kings could never buy
Wave in the starlight. You'll be waked at dawn
By feathered choirs whose notes were taught in heaven.

MUCH

Come, Jenny, come, we must prepare the hut
For Mistress Marian. Here's a bundle of ferns!

[*They go into the hut. The light is growing dimmer and richer.*]

[LITTLE JOHN

And here's a red cramoisy cloak, a baron
[*Handing them in at the door.*]
Dropt, as he fled one night from Robin Hood;
And here's a green, and here's a midnight blue,
All soft as down. But wait, I'll get you more.
[*Two of the* OUTLAWS *appear at the door with deerskins.* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *stands behind them with a great bunch of flowers and ferns.*]

FIRST OUTLAW

Here's fawn-skins, milder than a maiden's cheek.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Oh, you should talk in rhyme! The world should sing
Just for this once in tune, if Love were king!

SECOND OUTLAW

Here's deer-skins, for a carpet, smooth and meek.]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[I knew you would!] Ha! ha! Now look at what I bring!
[*He throws flowers into the hut, spray by spray, speaking in a kind of ecstasy.*]
Here's lavender and love and sweet wild thyme,
And dreams and blue-bells that the fairies chime,
Here's meadow-sweet and moonlight, bound in posies,
With ragged robin, traveller's joy and roses,
And here — just three leaves from a weeping willow;
And here — that's best — deep poppies for your pillow.

MUCH

And here's a pillow that I made myself,
Stuffed with dry rose-leaves and grey pigeon's down,
The softest thing on earth except my heart!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*Going aside and throwing himself down among the ferns to watch.*]

[[Just three sweet breaths and then the song is flown!]]

[MUCH *looks at him for a moment with a puzzled face, then turns to the hut again.*]

MUCH

Jenny, here, take it — though I'm fond of comforts,
Take it and give it to Maid Marian.

JENNY

Why, Much, 'tis bigger than thyself.

MUCH

Hush, child.
I meant to use it lengthways. 'Twould have made
A feather-bed complete for your poor Much,
Take it!

[*The* OUTLAWS *all go into the cave.*]

MARIAN

O Robin, what a fairy palace!
How cold and grey the walls of castles seem
Beside your forest's fragrant halls and bowers.
I do not think that I shall be afraid
To sleep this night, as I have often been
Beneath our square bleak battlements.

ROBIN

And look,
Between the boughs, there is your guard, all night,
That great white star, white as an angel's wings,
White as the star that shone on Bethlehem!
Good-night, sweetheart, good-night!

MARIAN

Good-night!

[ROBIN

One kiss!
Oh, clear bright eyes, dear heavens of sweeter stars,
Where angels play, and your own sweeter soul
Smiles like a child into the face of God,
Good-night! Good-night!]

[MARIAN *goes into the hut. The door is shut.* ROBIN *goes to the mouth of the cave and throws himself down on a couch of deerskins. The light grows dimly rich and fairy-like.*]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*Rising to his knees.*]
Here comes the little cloud!

[*A little moonlit cloud comes floating down between the tree-tops into the glade.* TITANIA *is seen reposing upon it. She steps to earth. The cloud melts away.*]

How blows the wind from fairyland, Titania?

TITANIA

Shadow-of-a-Leaf, the wicked queen has heard
Your master's plan for saving poor Will Scarlet.
She knows Maid Marian will be left alone,
Unguarded in these woods. The wicked Prince
Will steal upon her loneliness. He plots
To carry her away.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

What can we do?
Can I not break my fairy vows and tell?

TITANIA

No, no; you cannot, even if you would,
Convey our fairy lore to mortal ears.
[When have they heard our honeysuckle bugles
Blowing reveille to the crimson dawn?]

We can but speak by dreams; and, if you spoke,
They'd whip you, for your words would all ring false
Like sweet bells out of tune.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

What can we do?

TITANIA

Nothing, except on pain of death, to stay
The course of Time and Tide. There's Oberon!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Oberon!

TITANIA

He can tell you more than I.
[*Enter* OBERON.]

OBERON

Where's Orchis? Where's our fairy trumpeter
To call the court together?

ORCHIS

Here, my liege.

OBERON

Bugle them hither: [let thy red cheeks puff
Until thy curled petallic trumpet thrill
More loudly than a yellow-banded bee
Thro' all the clover clumps and boughs of thyme.
They are scattered far abroad.]

ORCHIS

My liege, it shall
Outroar the very wasp!
[*Exit.*]

OBERON

[*As he speaks,*] *the fairies come flocking from all sides into the glade.*]

[Methinks they grow
Too fond of feasting. As I passed this way
I saw the fairy halls of hollowed oaks
All lighted with their pale green glow-worm lamps.
And under great festoons of maiden-hair
Their brilliant mushroom tables groaned with food.
Hundreds of rose-winged fairies banqueted!
All Sherwood glittered with their prismy goblets
Brimming the thrice refined and luscious dew
Not only of our own most purplest violets,
But of strange fragrance, wild exotic nectars,
Drawn from the fairy blossoms of some star
Beyond our tree-tops! Ay, beyond that moon
Which is our natural limit — the big lamp
Heaven lights upon our boundary.]

ORCHIS

Mighty King,
The Court is all attendant on thy word.

OBERON

[*With great dignity.*]

[Elves, pixies, nixies, gnomes and leprechauns,]

[*He pauses.*]

We are met, this moonlight, for momentous councils
Concerning those two drowsy human lovers,
Maid Marian and her outlawed Robin Hood.
They are in dire peril; yet we may not break
Our vows of silence. [Many a time
Has Robin Hood by kindly words and deeds
Done in his human world, sent a new breath
Of life and joy like Spring to fairyland;
And at the moth-hour of this very dew-fall,
He saved a fairy, whom he thought, poor soul,

Only a may-fly in a spider's web,
He saved her from the clutches of that Wizard,
That Cruel Thing, that dark old Mystery,
Whom ye all know and shrink from —
[*Exclamations of horror from the fairies.*]
Plucked her forth,
So gently that not one bright rainbow gleam
Upon her wings was clouded, not one flake
Of bloom brushed off — there lies the broken web.
Go, look at it; and here is pale Perilla
To tell you all the tale.
[*The fairies cluster to look at the web, etc.*]

A FAIRY

Can we not make them free
Of fairyland, like Shadow-of-a-Leaf, to come
And go, at will, upon the wings of dreams?

OBERON

Not till they lose their wits like Shadow-of-a-Leaf.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Can I not break my fairy vows and tell?

OBERON

Only on pain of what we fairies call
Death!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Death?

OBERON

Never to join our happy revels,
Never to pass the gates of fairyland
Again, but die like mortals. What that means
We do not know — who knows?

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

If I could save them! —
I am only Shadow-of-a-Leaf!

OBERON

There is a King
Beyond the seas. If he came home in time,
All might be well. [We fairies only catch
Stray gleams, wandering shadows of things to come.]

TITANIA

Oh, if the King came home from the Crusade!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Why will he fight for graves beyond the sea?

OBERON

Our elfin couriers brought the news at dusk
That Lion-Heart, while wandering home thro' Europe,
In jet-black armour, like an errant knight,
Despite the great red cross upon his shield,
Was captured by some wicked prince and thrust
Into a dungeon. Only a song, they say,
Can break those prison-bars. There is a minstrel
That loves his King. If he should roam the world
Singing until from that dark tower he hears
The King reply, the King would be set free.

TITANIA

Only a song, only a minstrel?

OBERON

Ay;
And Blondel is his name.
[*A long, low sound of wailing is heard in the distance. The fairies shudder and creep together.*]

TITANIA

Hark, what is that?

OBERON

The cry of the poor, the cry of the oppressed,
The sound of women weeping for their children,
The victims of the forest laws. The moan
Of that dark world where mortals live and die
Sweeps like an icy wind thro' fairyland.
[And oh, it may grow bitterer yet, that sound!
'Twas Merlin's darkest prophecy that earth
Should all be wrapped in smoke and fire, the woods
Hewn down, the flowers discoloured and the sun
Begrimed, until the rows of lifeless trees
Against the greasy sunset seemed no more
Than sooty smudges of an ogre's thumbs
Upon the sweating forehead of a slave.
While, all night long, fed with the souls of men,
And bodies, too, great forges blast and burn
Till the great ogre's cauldrons brim with gold.]

[*The wailing sound is heard again in the distance.*]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

To be shut out for ever, only to hear
Those cries! I am only Shadow-of-a-Leaf, the fool,
I cannot face it! Is there no hope but this?
No hope for Robin and Maid Marian?

OBERON

If the great King comes home from the Crusade
In time! If not,— there is another King
Beyond the world, they say.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Death, that dark death!
To leave the sunlight and the flowers for ever!
I cannot bear it! Oh, I cannot tell them.

I'll wait — perhaps the great King will come home,
If not — Oh, hark, a wandering minstrel's voice?

OBERON

Who is drawing hither? Listen, fairies, listen!
[*Song heard approaching thro' the wood.*]

Knight on the narrow way,
Where wouldst thou ride?
"Onward," I heard him say,
"Love, to thy side!"

"Nay," sang a bird above;
"Stay, for I see
Death in the mask of love,
Waiting for thee."

[*The song breaks off. Enter a* MINSTREL, *leading a great white steed. He pauses, confronted by the fairy host. The moonlight dazzles him.*]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Minstrel, art thou, too, free of fairyland?
Where wouldst thou ride? What is thy name?

MINSTREL

My name
Is Blondel.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Blondel!

THE FAIRIES

Blondel!

MINSTREL

And I ride
Through all the world to seek and find my King!

[*He passes through the fairy host and goes into the woods on the further side of the glade, continuing his song, which dies away in the distance.*]

[*Song.*]

"Death? What is death?" he cried.
"I must ride on,
On to my true love's side,
Up to her throne!"

[*Curtain.*]

ACT III

ACT III

SCENE I. *May-day. An open place (near* NOTTINGHAM). *A crowd of rustics and townsfolk assembling to see the execution of* WILL SCARLET.

FIRST RUSTIC

A sad may-day! Where yonder gallows glowers,
We should have raised the may-pole.

SECOND RUSTIC

Ay, no songs,
No kisses in the ring, no country dances
To-day; [no lads and lasses on the green,
Crowning their queen of may.]
[*Enter* ROBIN HOOD, *disguised as an old beggar, with a green patch on one eye.*]

ROBIN

Is this the place,
Masters, where they're a-goin' to hang Will Scarlet?

FIRST RUSTIC

Ay, father, more's the pity.

ROBIN

Eh! Don't ye think
There may be scuffling, masters? [There's a many
That seems to like him well, here, roundabouts.

SECOND RUSTIC

Too many halberts round him. There's no chance.

ROBIN

I've heard the forest might break out, the lads
In Lincoln green, you wot of! If they did?]

FIRST RUSTIC

There's many here would swing a cudgel and help
To trip the Sheriff up. If Robin Hood
Were only here! But then he's outlawed now.

[SECOND RUSTIC

Ay, and there's big rewards out. It would be
Sure death for him to try a rescue now.
The biggest patch of Lincoln Green we'll see
This day, is that same patch on thy old eye,
Eh, lads!]

THIRD RUSTIC

What's more, they say Prince John is out
This very day, scouring thro' Sherwood forest
In quest of Lady Marian!

ROBIN

[*Sharply.*]

You heard that?

THIRD RUSTIC

Ay, for they say she's flown to Sherwood forest.

SECOND RUSTIC

[Ah! Ah? That's why he went.] I saw Prince John!
With these same eyes I saw him riding out
To Sherwood, not an hour ago.

ROBIN

You saw him?

SECOND RUSTIC

Ay, and he only took three men at arms.

FIRST RUSTIC

Three men at arms! Why then, he must ha' known
That Robin's men would all be busy here!
[He's none so bold, he would not risk his skin!]
I think there'll be some scuffling after all.

ROBIN

Ay, tell 'em so — go, spread it thro' the crowd!
[*He mutters to himself.*]
[He'd take some time, to find her, but 'fore God
We must be quick; 'fore God we must be quick!

SECOND RUSTIC

Why, father, one would never think to see thee
Thou had'st so sound a heart!]

FIRST RUSTIC

Ah, here they come!
The Sheriff and his men; and, in the midst,
There's poor Will Scarlet bound.

THE CROWD MURMURS

Ah, here they come!
Look at the halberts shining! Can you see him?

FIRST RUSTIC

There, there he is. His face is white: but, Lord,
He takes it bravely.

SECOND RUSTIC

He's a brave man, Will.

SHERIFF

Back with the crowd there, guards; delay no time!

[SOME WOMEN IN THE CROWD

Ah, ah, poor lad!]

ROBIN

[*Eagerly.*]

What are they doing now?

I cannot see!

[FIRST RUSTIC

The Sheriff's angered now!

SECOND RUSTIC

Ay, for they say a messenger has come
From that same godless hangman whose lean neck
I'd like to twist, saying he is delayed.
'Tis the first godly deed he has ever done.]

THIRD RUSTIC

The Sheriff says he will not be delayed.
But who will take the hangman's office?

ROBIN

Masters,
I have a thought; make way; let me bespeak
The Sheriff!

RUSTICS

How now, father, what's to do?

ROBIN

Make way, I tell you. Here's the man they want!

SHERIFF

What's this?

ROBIN

Good master Sheriff, I've a grudge
Against Will Scarlet. Let me have the task
Of sending him to heaven!

[CROWD

Ah-h-h, the old devil!]

SHERIFF

Come on, then, and be brief!

ROBIN

I'm not a hangman;
But I can cleave your thinnest hazel wand
At sixty yards.

SHERIFF

Shoot, then, and make an end.
Make way there, clear the way!
[*An opening is made in the crowd.* ROBIN *stands in the gap,* WILL SCARLET *is not seen by the audience.*]

[CROWD

Ah-h-h, the old devil!]

ROBIN

I'll shoot him one on either side, just graze him,
To show you how I love him; then the third
Slick in his heart.
[*He shoots. A murmur goes up from the crowd. The crowd hides* WILL SCARLET *during the shooting. But* ROBIN *remains in full view, in the opening.*]

SHERIFF

[*Angrily.*]
Take care! You've cut the cord
That bound him on that side!

ROBIN

Then here's the second!
I will be careful!
[*He takes a steady aim.*]

A RUSTIC TO HIS NEIGHBOURS

I' faith, lads, he can shoot!
[What do you think — that green patch on his eye
Smacks of the merry men! He's tricking them!]
[ROBIN *shoots. A louder murmur goes up from the crowd.*]

SHERIFF

You have cut the rope again!

A CRY

He has cut him free!

ROBIN

All right! All right! It's just to tease the dog!
Here's for the third now!
[*He aims and shoots quickly. There is a loud cry of a wounded man; then a shout from the crowd.*]

CROWD

Ah-h-h, he has missed; he has killed
One of the guards!

FIRST RUSTIC

What has he done?

SECOND RUSTIC

He has killed
One of the Sheriff's men!

SHERIFF

There's treachery here!
I'll cleave the first man's heart that moves!

ROBIN

Will Scarlet,
Pick up that dead man's halbert!

SHERIFF

Treachery! Help!
Down with the villain!

ROBIN

[*Throws off his beggar's crouch and hurls the* SHERIFF *and several of his men back amongst the crowd. His cloak drops off.*]
Sherwood! A merry Sherwood!

RUSTICS

Ah! ha! The Lincoln Green! A Robin Hood!
[*A bugle rings out and immediately some of the yokels throw off their disguise and the Lincoln green appears as by magic amongst the crowd. The guards are rushed and hustled by them. Robin and several of his men make a ring round* WILL SCARLET.]

SHERIFF

It is the outlawed Earl of Huntingdon:
There is a great reward upon his head.
Down with him!
[*The* SHERIFF'S *men make a rush at the little band. A* KNIGHT *in jet black armour, with a red-cross shield, suddenly appears and forces his way through the mob, sword in hand.*]

KNIGHT

What, so many against so few!
Back, you wild wolves. Now, foresters, follow me,
For our St. George and merry England, charge,
Charge them, my lads!
[*The* FORESTERS *make a rush with him and the* SHERIFF *and his men take to flight.*]

ROBIN

Now back to Sherwood, swiftly!
A horse, or I shall come too late; a horse!
[*He sees the* KNIGHT *in armour standing by his horse.*]
Your pardon, sir; our debt to you is great,
Too great almost for thanks; but if you be
Bound by the vows of chivalry, I pray you
Lend me your charger; and my men will bring you
To my poor home in Sherwood. There you'll find
A most abundant gratitude.

KNIGHT

Your name?

ROBIN

Was Huntingdon; but now is Robin Hood.

KNIGHT

If I refuse?

ROBIN

Then, sir, I must perforce
Take it. I am an outlaw, but the law
Of manhood still constrains me —'tis a matter
Of life and death —

KNIGHT

Take it and God be with you!
I'll follow you to Sherwood with your men.
[ROBIN *seizes the horse, leaps to the saddle, and gallops away.*]

[*Curtain.*]

SCENE II. *Sherwood Forest. Outside the cave.*]
JENNY, MARIAN *and* WIDOW SCARLET.

MARIAN

This dreadful waiting! [How I wish that Robin
Had listened to the rest and stayed with me.
How still the woods are!] Jenny, do you think
There will be fighting? Oh, I am selfish, mother;
You need not be afraid. Robin will bring
Will Scarlet safely back to Sherwood. Why,
Perhaps they are all returning even now!
[Cheer up! How long d'you think they've been away,
Jenny, six hours or more? The sun is high,
And all the dew is gone.]

JENNY

[Nay, scarce three hours.]
Now don't you keep a-fretting. They'll be back,
Quite soon enough. [I've scarcely spoke with you,
This last three days and more; and even now
It seems I cannot get you to myself,
Two's quite enough.]

[*To* WIDOW SCARLET.]

Come, widow, come with me.
I'll give you my own corner in the hut
And make you cosy. If you take a nap
Will Scarlet will be here betimes you wake.
[*Takes her to the hut and shuts her in.*]
[There, drat her, for a mumping mumble-crust!

MARIAN

Come, Jenny, that's too bad; the poor old dame
Is lonely.]

JENNY

[She's not lonely when she sleeps,
And if I never get you to myself
Where was the good of trapesing after you
And living here in Sherwood like wild rabbits?]
You ha'nt so much as let me comb your hair
This last three days and more.

MARIAN

Well, comb it, Jenny,
Now, if you like, and comb it all day long;
[But don't get crabbéd, and don't speak so crossly!]
[JENNY *begins loosening* MARIAN'S *hair and combing it.*]

JENNY

Why, Mistress, it grows longer every day.
[It's far below your knees, and how it shines!
And wavy, just like Much the Miller's brook,
Where it comes tumbling out into the sun,
Like gold, red gold.]

MARIAN

Ah, that's provoking, Jenny,
For you forgot to bring me my steel glass,
[And, if you chatter so, I shall soon want it.]

JENNY

I've found a very good one at a pinch.
There's a smooth silver pool, down in the stream,
Where you can see your face most beautiful.

MARIAN

So that's how Jenny spends her lonely hours,
A sad female Narcissus, while poor Much
Dwines to an Echo!

JENNY

I don't like those gods.
I never cared for them. But, as for Much,
Much is the best of all the merry men.
And, mistress, O, he speaks so beautifully,
It *might* be just an Echo from blue hills
Far, far away! [You see he's quite a scholar:
Much, more an' most (That's what he calls the three
Greasy caparisons — much, more an' most)!
You see they thought that being so very small
They could not make him grow to be a man,
They'd make a scholar of him instead. The Friar
Taught him his letters. He can write his name,
And mine, and yours, just like a missal book,
In lovely colours; and he always draws
The first big letter of JENNY like a tree
With naked Cupids hiding in the branches.
Mistress, I don't believe you hear one word
I ever speak to you! Your eyes are always
That far and far away.

MARIAN

I'm listening, Jenny!

JENNY

Well, when he draws the first big M of yours,
He makes it like a bridge from earth to heaven,
With white-winged angels passing up and down;
And, underneath the bridge, in a black stream,
He puts the drowning face of the bad Prince
Holding his wicked hands out, while a devil
Stands on the bank and with a pointed stake
Keeps him from landing —]
Ah, what's that? What's that?

MARIAN

O Jenny, how you startled me!

JENNY

I thought
I saw that same face peering thro' the ferns
Yonder — there — see, they are shaking still.
[*She screams.*]
Ah! Ah!

[PRINCE JOHN *and another man appear advancing across the glade.*]

JOHN

So here's my dainty tigress in her den,
[And — Warman — there's a pretty scrap for you
Beside her.] Now, sweet mistress, will you deign
To come with me, to change these cheerless woods
For something queenlier? [If I be not mistaken,
You have had time to tire of that dark cave.
Was I not right, now? Surely you can see
Those tresses were not meant to waste their gold
Upon this desert. Nay, but Marian, hear me.
I do not jest.]

[*At a sign from* MARIAN, JENNY *goes quickly inside the cave.*]

That's well! Dismiss your maid!
Warman, remove a little.
[*His man retires.*]
I see you think
A little better of me! Out in the wood
There waits a palfrey for you, and the stirrup
Longs, [as I long,] to clasp your dainty foot.
[I am very sure by this you must be tired
Of outlawry, a lovely maid like you.]
[*He draws nearer.*]

MARIAN

Wait — I must think, must think.

JOHN

Give me your hand!
Why do you shrink from me? [If you could know
The fire that burns me night and day, you would not
Refuse to let me snatch one cooling kiss
From that white hand of yours.]

MARIAN

If you be prince,
You will respect my loneliness and go.

JOHN

How can I leave you, when by day and night
I see that face of yours.
[I'll not pretend
I do not love you, do not long for you,
Desire and hunger for your kiss, your touch!
I'll not pretend to be a saint, you see!
I hunger and thirst for you. Marian, Marian.

MARIAN

You are mad!

JOHN

Ay, mad for you.
Body and soul
I am broken up with love for you. Your eyes
Flash like the eyes of a tigress, and I love them
The better for it.
Ah, do not shrink from me!]

[JENNY *comes out of the cave and hands* MARIAN *a bow. She leaps back and aims it at* JOHN.]

MARIAN

Back, you wild beast, or by the heaven above us,
I'll kill you! Now, don't doubt me. I can shoot
Truly as any forester. I swear,
Prince or no prince, king or no king, I'll kill you
If you should stir one step from where you stand.

JOHN

Come, come, sweet Marian, put that weapon down.
I was beside myself, was carried away.
I cannot help my love for —

MARIAN

I'll not hear
Another sickening word: throw down your arms,
That dagger at your side.

JOHN

Oh, that's too foolish,
Marian, I swear —

[MARIAN

You see that rusty stain
Upon the silver birch down yonder? Watch.
[*She shoots. Then swiftly aims at him again.*]
Now, throw your weapon down.]
[*He pulls out the dagger and throws it down, with a shrug of his shoulders. One of his men steals up behind* MARIAN.]

JENNY

Ah, Mistress Marian,
There's one behind you! Look!
[*The man springs forward and seizes* MARIAN'S *arms.*]

JOHN

[*Coming forward and taking hold of her also.*]
So, my sweet tigress,
You're trapped then, are you? Well, we'll waste no time!
We'll talk this over when we reach the castle.
Keep off the maid, there, Warman; I can manage
This turbulent beauty. [Ah, by God, you shall
Come! Ah? God's blood, what's this?]
[MARIAN *has succeeded in drawing her dagger and slightly wounding him. She wrests herself free.*]

MARIAN

Keep back, I warn you!

JOHN

[*Advancing slowly.*]

Strike, now strike if you will. You will not like
To see the red blood spurting up your hand.
That's not maid's work. Come, strike!
[ROBIN HOOD *appears at the edge of the glade behind him.*]
You see, you cannot!
Your heart is tenderer than you think.

ROBIN

[*Quietly.*]

Prince John!

JOHN

[*Turns round and confronts* ROBIN.]

Out with your blade, Warman; call up the rest!
[We can strike freely now, without a fear
Of marring the sweet beauty of the spoil.]
We four can surely make an end of him.
Have at him, lads, and swiftly, or the thieves
Will all be down on us.
[ROBIN *draws his sword and sets his back to an oak. The other two followers of* PRINCE JOHN *come out of the wood.*]

ROBIN

Come on, all four!
This oak will shift its roots before I budge
One inch from four such howling wolves. Come on;
[You must be tired of fighting women-folk.
Come on! By God, sir, you must guard your head
Better than that,]
[*He disarms* WARMAN.]
[Or you're just food for worms
Already; come, you dogs!]

JOHN

Work round, [you three,]
Behind him! [Drive him out from that damned oak!]

ROBIN

Oh, that's a princely speech! Have at you, sir!
[*He strikes* PRINCE JOHN'S *sword out of his hand and turns suddenly to confront the others.* JOHN *picks up a dagger and makes as if to stab* ROBIN *in the back. At the same instant, bugles are heard in the distance. The red-cross knight flashes between the trees and seizing* JOHN'S *arm in his gauntleted hand, disarms him, then turns to help* ROBIN.]

KNIGHT

What, four on one! Down with your blades, you curs,
Or, by Mahound! —
[*The three men take to flight.* JOHN *stands staring at the newcomer. The* FORESTERS *appear, surrounding the glade.*]

JOHN

[*Muttering.*]
What? Thou? Thou? Or his ghost?
No — no — it cannot be.

ROBIN

Let them yelp home,
[The pitiful jackals.] They have left behind
The prime offender. Ha, there, my merry lads,
All's well; but take this villain into the cave
And guard him there.
[*The* FORESTERS *lead* PRINCE JOHN *into the cave.*]

JOHN

[*To the* FORESTERS.]
Answer me one thing; who
Is yonder red-cross knight?

A FORESTER

No friend of thine,
Whoe'er he be!

KNIGHT

[*To* ROBIN.]
I need not ask *his* name.
I grieve to know it!

ROBIN

Sir, I am much beholden
To your good chivalry. What thanks is mine
To give, is all your own.

KNIGHT

Then I ask this!
Give me that prisoner! I think his life is mine.

ROBIN

You saved my own, and more, you saved much more
Than my poor life is worth. But, sir, think well!
This man is dangerous, not to me alone,
But to the King of England; for he'll yet
Usurp the throne! Think well!

KNIGHT

I ask no more.
I have more reasons than you know.

ROBIN

So be it.
Ho! Bring the prisoner back!

[*The* FORESTERS *bring* PRINCE JOHN *back. He stares at the* KNIGHT *as if in fear.*]

Sir, you shall judge him.
This prisoner is your own.

KNIGHT

Then — let him go!

FORESTERS

What! Set him free?

ROBIN

Obey!
[*They release* PRINCE JOHN.]

KNIGHT

Out of my sight;
Go!

PRINCE JOHN

What man is this?

KNIGHT

Quickly, get thee gone!
[PRINCE JOHN *goes out, shaken and white.*]

ROBIN

We'll think no more of him! It is our rule
That whomsoe'er we meet in merry greenwood
Should dine with us. Will you not be our guest?

KNIGHT

That's a most happy thought! I have not heard
A merrier word than dinner all this day.
I am well-nigh starved.

ROBIN

Will you not raise your visor
And let us know to whose good knightly hand
We are so beholden?

KNIGHT

Sir, you will pardon me,
If, for a little, I remain unknown.
But, tell me, are you not that Robin Hood
Who breaks the forest laws?

ROBIN

That is my name.
[We hold this earth as naturally our own
As the glad common air we breathe. We think
No man, no king, can so usurp the world
As not to give us room to live free lives,]
But, if you shrink from eating the King's deer —

KNIGHT

Shrink? Ha! ha! ha! I count it as my own!
[*The* FORESTERS *appear, preparing the dinner on a table* [*of green turfs,*] *beneath a spreading oak.* MARIAN *and* JENNY *appear at the door of the hut.* JENNY *goes across to help at the preparations for dinner.*]

ROBIN

Ah, there's my Lady Marian! Will you not come
And speak with her?
[*He and the* KNIGHT *go and talk to* MARIAN *in the background.*]

LITTLE JOHN

[*At the table.*]
The trenchers all are set;
[Manchets of wheat, cream, curds and honey-cakes,

Venison pasties, roasted pigeons!] Much,
Run to the cave; we'll broach our rarest wine
To-day. [Old Much is waiting for thee there
To help him. He is growling roundly, too,
At thy delay.

MUCH

[*Going towards the cave.*]
Ah me, my poor old father!

JENNY

I've dressed the salt and strawed the dining hall
With flowers.]
[*Enter* FRIAR TUCK *with several more* FORESTERS *and* WILL SCARLET.]

ROBIN

Ah, good Will Scarlet, here at last!

[FRIAR TUCK

We should ha' been here sooner; but these others
Borrowed a farmer's market cart and galloped
Ahead of us!

ROBIN]

Thy mother is in the hut,
Sheer broken down with hope and fearfulness,
Waiting and trembling for thee, Will. Go in,
Put thy big arm around her.
[WILL SCARLET *goes into the hut with a cry.*]

SCARLET

Mother!

FRIAR TUCK

You see,
My sons, you couldn't expect the lad to run!
[There is a certain looseness in the limbs,

A quaking of the flesh that overcomes
The bravest who has felt a hangman's rope
Cuddling his neck.]

ROBIN

You judge him by the rope
That cuddles your slim waist! Oh, you sweet armful,
Sit down and pant! I warrant you were glad
To bear him company.

FRIAR TUCK

I'll not deny it!
I am a man of solids. Like the Church,
I am founded on a rock.
[*He sits down.*]

ROBIN

Solids, i' faith!
Sir, it is true he is partly based on beef;
He grapples with it squarely; but fluids, too,
Have played their part in that cathedral choir
He calls his throat. [One godless virtue, sir,
They seem to have given him. Never a nightingale
Gurgles jug! jug! in mellower tones than he
When jugs are flowing. Never a thrush can pipe
Sweet, sweet, so rarely as, when a pipe of wine
Summers his throttle, we'll make him sing to us
One of his heathen ditties — *The Malmsey Butt,*
Or *Down the Merry Red Lane!*]

FRIAR TUCK

Oh, ay, you laugh,
But, though I cannot run, when I am rested
I'll challenge you, Robin, to a game of buffets,
[One fair, square, stand-up, stand-still, knock-down blow
Apiece; you'll need no more.] If you not kiss

The turf, at my first clout, I will forego
Malmsey for ever!

ROBIN

Friar, I recant;
You're champion there. Fists of a common size
I will encounter; but not whirling hams
Like thine!

FRIAR TUCK

I knew it!

JENNY

[*Approaching.*]
Please you, sirs, all is ready!

FRIAR TUCK

Ah, Jenny, Jenny, Jenny, that's good news!
[WILL SCARLET *comes out of the hut with his arm round his mother. They all sit down at the table of turfs. Enter* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *timidly.*]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Is there a place for me?

A FORESTER

Ay, come along!

FRIAR TUCK

Now, Robin, don't forget the grace, my son.

ROBIN

[*Standing up.*]
It is our custom, sir, since our repast
Is borrowed from the King, to drain one cup
To him, and his return from the Crusade,
Before we dine. [That same wine-bibbing friar

Calls it our 'grace' ; and constitutes himself
Remembrancer — without a cause, for never
Have we forgotten, never while bugles ring
Thro' Sherwood, shall forget] — Outlaws, the King!
[*All stand up except the* KNIGHT.]

CRIES

The King and his return from the Crusade!
[*They drink and resume their seats.*]

ROBIN

You did not drink the health, sir Knight. I hope
You hold with Lion-Heart.

KNIGHT

Yes; I hold with him.
You were too quick for me. I had not drawn
These gauntlets off.
But tell me, Lady Marian,
When is your bridal day with Robin Hood?

MARIAN

We shall be wedded when the King comes home
From the Crusade.

KNIGHT

Ah, when the King comes home!
That's music — all the birds of April sing
In those four words for me — the King comes home.

MARIAN

I am glad you love him, sir.

ROBIN

But you're not eating!
Your helmet's locked and barred. Will you not raise
Your visor?

KNIGHT

[*Laughs.*]
Ha! ha! ha! You see I am trapped!
I did not wish to raise it! Hunger and thirst
Break down all masks and all disguises, Robin.
[*He rises and removes his helmet, revealing the face of* RICHARD CŒUR DE LION.]

ROBIN

The King!
[*They all leap to their feet.*]

OUTLAWS

The King! The King!

ROBIN

But oh, my liege,
I should have known, when we were hard beset
Around Will Scarlet by their swarming bands,
And when you rode out of the Eastern sky
And hurled our foemen down, I should have known
It was the King come home from the Crusade!
And when I was beset here in the wood
By treacherous hands again, I should have known
Whose armour suddenly burned between the leaves!
I should have known, either it was St. George
Or else the King come home from the Crusade!

RICHARD

Indeed there is one thing that might have told you,
Robin — a lover's instinct, since it seems
So much for you and Marian depends
On my return.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Sire, you will pardon me,
For I am only a fool, and yet methinks

You know not half the meaning of those words —
The King, the King comes home from the Crusade!
Thrust up your swords, heft uppermost, my lads,
And shout — the King comes home from the Crusade.
[*He leaps on a seat, and thrusts up the King's sword, heft uppermost, as if it were a cross.*]

ROBIN

Pardon him, sire, poor Shadow-of-a-Leaf has lost
His wits!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

That's what Titania said you'd say,
Poor sweet bells out of tune! But oh, don't leave,
Don't leave the forest! There's darker things to come!
Don't leave the forest! [I have wits enough at least
To wrap my legs around my neck for warmth
On winter nights.

RICHARD

Well, you've no need to pass
The winter in these woods —

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Oh, not *that* winter!]

ROBIN

Shadow-of-a-Leaf, be silent!
[SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *goes aside and throws himself down sobbing among the ferns.*]

RICHARD

[When even your cave
Methinks can scarce be cheery.] Huntingdon,
Your earldom we restore to you this day!
You and my Lady Marian shall return
To Court with us, where your true bridal troth

Shall be fulfilled with golden marriage bells.
Now, friends, the venison pasty! [We must hear
The Malmsey Butt and *Down the Merry Red Lane,*]
Ere we set out, at dawn, for London Town.

ROBIN

Alan-a-Dale shall touch a golden string
To speed our feast, sire [for he soars above
The gross needs of the Churchman!]

RICHARD

Alan-a-Dale?

WILL SCARLET

Our greenwood minstrel, sire! His harp is ours
Because we won his bride for him.

RICHARD

His bride?

REYNOLD GREENLEAF

Was to be wedded, sire, against her will
Last May, to a rich old baron.

RICHARD

[Pigeon-pie —
And Malmsey — yes] — a rich old baron — tell!

ROBIN

Sire, on the wedding day, my merry men
Crowded the aisles with uninvited guests;
And, as the old man drew forth the golden ring,
[They threw aside their cloaks with one great shout
Of 'Sherwood'; and, for all its crimson panes,]
The church was one wild sea of Lincoln green!
The Forest had broken in, sire, and the bride
Like a wild rose tossing on those green boughs,

Was borne away and wedded here by Tuck
To her true lover; and so — his harp is ours.

ALAN-A-DALE

No feasting song, sire, but the royal theme
Of chivalry — a song I made last night
In yonder ruined chapel. It is called
The Old Knight's Vigil.

RICHARD

Our hearts will keep it young!

[ALAN-A-DALE *sings,* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *raises his head among the ferns.*]

[*Song.*]

I

Once, in this chapel, Lord,
Young and undaunted,
Over my virgin sword
Lightly I chaunted,—
"Dawn ends my watch. I go
Shining to meet the foe!"

II

"Swift with thy dawn," I said,
"Set the lists ringing!
Soon shall thy foe be sped,
And the world singing!
Bless my bright plume for me,
Christ, King of Chivalry."

[SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *rises to his knees amongst the ferns.*]

III

"War-worn I kneel to-night,
Lord, by Thine altar!
Oh, in to-morrow's fight,
Let me not falter!
Bless my dark arms for me,
Christ, King of Chivalry.

IV

"Keep Thou my broken sword
All the long night through
While I keep watch and ward!
Then — the red fight through,
Bless the wrenched haft for me,
Christ, King of Chivalry.

V

"Keep, in thy piercèd hands,
Still the bruised helmet:
Let not their hostile bands
Wholly o'erwhelm it!
Bless my poor shield for me,
Christ, King of Chivalry.

VI

"Keep Thou the sullied mail,
Lord, that I tender
Here, at Thine altar-rail!
Then — let Thy splendour
Touch it once . . . and I go
Stainless to meet the foe."

[SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *rises to his feet and takes a step towards the minstrel.*]

[*Curtain.*]

ACT IV

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Garden of the King's Palace. Enter* JOHN *and* ELINOR.

ELINOR

You will be king the sooner! Not a month
In England, and my good son Lion-Heart
Must wander over-seas again. [These two,
Huntingdon and his bride, must bless the star
Of errant knighthood.]

JOHN

He stayed just long enough
To let them pass one fearless honeymoon
In the broad sunlight of his royal favour,
Then, like a meteor off goes great King Richard,
And leaves them but the shadow of his name
To shelter them from my revenge. [They know it!
I have seen her shiver like a startled fawn
And draw him closer, damn him, as I passed.]

ELINOR

They would have flitted to the woods again
But for my Lord Fitzwalter.

JOHN

That old fool
Has wits enough to know I shall be king,
[And for his land's sake cheats himself to play
Sir Pandarus of Troy. "'Tis wrong, dear daughter,
To think such evil."] Pah, he makes me sick!

ELINOR

Better to laugh. He is useful.

JOHN

If I were king!
If Richard were to perish over-seas!
I'd —

ELINOR

You'd be king the sooner. [Never fear:
These wandering meteors flash into their graves
Like lightning, and no thunder follows them
To warn their foolish henchmen.]

JOHN

[*Looking at her searchingly.*]
Shall I risk
The King's return?

ELINOR

What do you mean?

JOHN

I mean
[I cannot wait and watch this Robin Hood
Dangle the fruit of Tantalus before me,
Then eat it in my sight!] I have borne enough!
He gave me like a fairing to my brother
In Sherwood Forest; and I now must watch him,
A happy bridegroom with the happy bride,
[Whose lips I meant for mine.]

ELINOR

And do you think
I love to see it?

JOHN

Had it not been for you
He would have died ere this!

ELINOR

Then let him die!

JOHN

Oh, ay, but do you mean it, mother?

ELINOR

God,
I hate him, hate him!

JOHN

Mother, he goes at noon
To Sherwood Forest, with a bag of gold
For some of his old followers. If, by chance
He [fall — how saith the Scripture? — among thieves
And] vanish — is not heard of any more,
I think Suspicion scarce could lift her head
Among these roses here to hiss at me,
When Lion-Heart returns.

ELINOR

Vanish?

JOHN

I would not
Kill him too quickly. I would have him taken
To a dungeon that I know.

ELINOR

You have laid your trap
Already? Tell me. You need not be afraid!
[I saw them kiss, in the garden, yesternight;
And I have wondered, ever since, if fire

Could make a brand quite hot enough to stamp
My hate upon him.]

JOHN

[Well, then, I will tell you —
The plan is laid; and, if his bag of gold
Rejoice one serf to-day, then I'll resign
Maid Marian to his loving arms for ever.
But you must help me, mother, or she'll suspect.
Do not let slip your mask of friendliness,
As I have feared!] Look — there our lovers come
Beneath that arch of roses. Look, look, mother,
They are taking leave of one another now,
A ghastly parting, for he will be gone
Well nigh four hours, they think. [To look at them,
One might suppose they knew it was for ever.]

ELINOR

Come, or my hate will show itself in my face:
I must not see them.

[*Exeunt* PRINCE *and* ELINOR. *A pause. Enter* ROBIN HOOD *and* MARIAN.]

ROBIN

So, good-bye, once more,
Sweetheart.

MARIAN

Four hours; how shall I pass the time?
Four hours, four ages, you will scarce be home
By dusk; how shall I pass it?

ROBIN

You've to think
What robe to wear at the great masque to-night
And then to don it. When you've done all that
I shall be home again.

[MARIAN

What, not before?

ROBIN

That's not unlikely, either.

MARIAN

Now you mock me,
But you'll be back before the masque begins.

ROBIN

I warrant you I will.]

MARIAN

It is a month
To-day since we were married. Did you know it?
Fie, I believe you had forgotten, Robin.

ROBIN

I had, almost. If marriage make the moons
Fly, as this month has flown, we shall be old
And grey in our graves before we know it.
I wish that we could chain old Father Time.

MARIAN

And break his glass into ten thousand pieces.

ROBIN

And drown his cruel scythe ten fathom deep,
Under the bright blue sea whence Love was born:

[MARIAN

Ah, but we have not parted all this month
More than a garden's breadth, an arrow's flight:
Time will be dead till you come back again.
Four hours of absence make four centuries!
Do you remember how the song goes, Robin,

That bids true lovers not to grieve at parting
Often? for Nature gently severs them thus,
Training them up with kind and tender art,
For the great day when they must part for ever.

ROBIN

Do you believe it, Marian?

MARIAN

No; for love
Buried beneath the dust of life and death,
Would wait for centuries of centuries,
Ages of ages, until God remembered,
And, through that perishing cloud-wrack, face looked up
Once more to loving face.

ROBIN

Your hope — and mine!
Is not a man's poor memory, indeed,
A daily resurrection? Your hope — and mine!

MARIAN

And all the world's at heart! I do believe it.

ROBIN

And I — if only that so many souls
Like yours have died believing they should meet
Again, lovers and children, little children!
God will not break that trust. I have found my heaven
Again in you; and, though I stumble still,
Your small hand leads me thro' the darkness, up
And onward, to the heights I dared not see,
And dare not even now; but my head bows
Above your face; I see them in your eyes.]
Love, point me onward still!

[*He takes her in his arms.*]

Good-bye! Good-bye!

MARIAN

Come back, come back, before the masque begins!

ROBIN

Ay, or a little later — never fear:
You'll not so easily lose me.

MARIAN

I shall count
The minutes!

ROBIN

Why, you're trembling!

MARIAN

Yes, I am foolish.
This is the first small parting we have had;
But — you'll be back ere dusk?

ROBIN

[*Laughing.*]
Ah, do you think
That chains of steel could hold me, sweet, from you,
[With those two heavenly eyes to call me home,
Those lips to welcome me?] Good-bye!

MARIAN

Good-bye!
[*He goes hurriedly out. She looks after him for a moment, then suddenly calls.*]
Robin! [Ah, well, no matter now — too late!]
[*She stands looking after him.*]

[SCENE II. *Sherwood Forest: dusk. Outside the cave, as in the second act.*] SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *runs quickly across the glade, followed by* PUCK.

PUCK

Shadow-of-a-Leaf! Shadow-of-a-Leaf! Shadow-of-a-Leaf!
Don't dance away like that; don't hop; don't skip
Like that, I tell you! [I'll never do it again,
I promise. Don't be silly now!] Come here;
I want to tell you something. Ah, that's right.
Come, sit down here upon this bank of thyme
[" While I thine amiable ears "— Oh, no,
Forgive me, ha! ha! ha!]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Now, Master Puck,
You'll kindly keep your word! [A foxglove spray
In the right hand is deadlier than the sword
That mortals use, and one resounding thwack
Applied to your slim fairyhood's green limbs
Will make it painful, painful, very painful,
Next time your worship wishes to sit down
Cross-legged upon a mushroom.]

PUCK

Ha! ha! ha!
Poor Shadow-of-a-Leaf!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

You keep your word, that's all!

PUCK

Haven't I kept my word? Wasn't it I
That made you what these poor, dull mortals call
Crazy? [Who crowned you with the cap and bells?
Who made you such a hopeless, glorious fool
That wise men are afraid of every word

You utter? Wasn't it I that made you free
Of fairyland — that showed you how to pluck
Fern-seed by moonlight, and to walk and talk
Between the lights, with urchins and with elves?
Is there another fool twixt earth and heaven
Like you — ungrateful rogue — answer me that!]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

All true, dear gossip, and for saving me
From the poor game of blind man's buff men call
Wisdom, I thank you; [but to hang and buzz
Like a mad dragon-fly, now on my nose,
Now on my neck, now singing in my ears,
Is that to make me free of fairyland?
No — that's enough to make the poor fool mad
And take to human wisdom.

PUCK

Yet you love me,
Ha! ha! — you love me more than all the rest.
You can't deny it! You can't deny it! Ha! ha!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

I won't deny it, gossip. E'en as I think
There must be something loves us creatures, Puck,
More than the Churchmen say. We are so teased
With thorns, bullied with briars, baffled with stars.
I've lain sometimes and laughed until I cried
To see the round moon rising o'er these trees
With that same foolish face of heavenly mirth
Winking at lovers in the blue-bell glade.]

PUCK

[Lovers! Ha! ha! I caught a pair of 'em
Last night, behind the ruined chapel! Lovers!
O Lord, these mortals, they'll be the death of me!]
Hist, who comes here?

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Scarlet and Little John,
And all the merry men — not half so merry
Since Robin went away. He was to come
And judge between the rich and poor to-day,
I think he has forgotten.

PUCK

Hist, let me hide
Behind this hawthorn bush till they are gone.
[*Enter the* FORESTERS — [*they all go into the cave except* SCARLET *and* LITTLE JOHN, *who stand at the entrance, looking anxiously back.*]

LITTLE JOHN

I have never known the time when Robin Hood
Said "I will surely come," and hath not been
Punctual as yonder evening star.

SCARLET

Pray God
No harm hath fallen him. Indeed he said,
"Count on my coming."

LITTLE JOHN

I'll sound yet one more call.
They say these Courts will spoil a forester.
It may be he has missed the way. I'd give
My sword-hand just to hear his jolly bugle
Answer me.
[*He blows a forest call. They listen. All is silent.*]

SCARLET

Silence — only the sough of leaves!

LITTLE JOHN

Well, I'm for sleep: the moon is not so bright
Since Robin left us.

SCARLET

Ha! Shadow-of-a-Leaf, alone?
I thought I heard thy voice.

LITTLE JOHN

[Oh, he will talk
With ferns and flowers and whisper to the mice!]
Perfectly happy, art thou not, dear fool?

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Perfectly happy since I lost my wits!

SCARLET

Pray that thou never dost regain them, then,
Shadow-of-a-Leaf.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

I thank you kindly, sir,
And pray that you may quickly lose your own,
And so be happy, too. [Robin's away,
But, if you'd lost your wits, you would not grieve.]

SCARLET

Good-night, good fool.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[I will not say "Good-night,"
Wise man, for I am crazed, and so I know
'Tis good, and yet you'll grieve.] I wish you both
A bad night that will tease your wits away
And make you happy.
[*The* OUTLAWS *enter the cave.* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *beckons to* PUCK, *who steals out again.*]

PUCK

Shadow-of-a-Leaf, some change
Is creeping o'er the forest. [I myself
Scarce laugh so much since Robin went away!
Oh, my head hangs as heavily as a violet
Brimmed with the rain.] Shadow-of-a-Leaf, a cloud,
A whisper steals across this listening wood!
I am growing afraid. Dear fool, I am thy Puck,
But I am growing afraid there comes an end
To all our Sherwood revels, and I shall never
Tease thee again.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Here comes the King!
[*Enter* OBERON.]
Hail, Oberon.
King of the fairies, I strew ferns before you.
There are no palms here: ferns do just as well!

OBERON

Shadow-of-a-Leaf, our battles all are wasted;
Our fairy dreams whereby we strove to warn
Robin and Marian, wasted. Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
Dear Robin Hood, the lover of the poor,
And kind Maid Marian, our forest queen,
Are in the toils at last.
[*He pauses.*]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Speak, speak!

OBERON

Prince John
Hath trapped and taken Robin.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Is not Richard
King of this England? Did not Richard [tempt
Robin, for Marian's sake, to leave the forest?
Did he not] swear upon the Holy Cross
That Robin should be Earl of Huntingdon
And hold his lands in safety?

OBERON

Only fear
Of Richard held the wicked Prince in leash.
But Richard roamed abroad again. Prince John
Would murder Robin secretly.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Wise men
Fight too much for these holy sepulchres!
Are not the living images of God
Better than empty graves?

OBERON

One grave is filled
Now; for our fairy couriers have brought
Tidings that Richard Lion-Heart is dead.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Dead?

OBERON

Dead! In a few brief hours the news will reach
The wicked Prince. He will be King of England,
With Marian in his power!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

No way to save them!

OBERON

We cannot break our fairy vows of silence.
A mortal, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, can break those vows,
But only on pain of death.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Oberon, I,
Shadow-of-a-Leaf, the fool, must break my vows!
I must save Robin Hood [that he may save
Marian from worse than death.]

OBERON

Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
Think what death means to you, never to join
Our happy sports again, never to see
The moonlight streaming through these ancient oaks
Again, never to pass the fairy gates
Again. We cannot help it. They will close
Like iron in your face, and you will hear
Our happy songs within: but you will lie
Alone, without, dying, [and never a word
To comfort you, no hand to touch your brow.]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

So be it. I shall see them entering in!
The time is brief. Quick, tell me, where is Robin?
Quick, or the news that makes Prince John a king
Will ruin all.

OBERON

Robin is even now
Thrust in the great dark tower beyond the wood,
The topmost cell where foot can never climb.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Cannot an arrow reach it? Ay, be swift;
Come, lead me thither.

OBERON

[I cannot disobey
The word that kills the seed to raise the wheat,
The word that —] Shadow-of-a-Leaf, I think I know
Now, why great kings ride out to the Crusade.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Quickly, come, quickly!

[*Exeunt* OBERON *and* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF. PUCK *remains staring after them, then vanishes with a sob, between the trees.* [* LITTLE JOHN *and* SCARLET *appear once more at the mouth of the cave.*]

SCARLET

I thought I heard a voice.

LITTLE JOHN

'Twas only Shadow-of-a-Leaf again. He talks
For hours among the ferns, plays with the flowers,
And whispers to the mice, perfectly happy!

SCARLET

I cannot rest for thinking that some harm
Hath chanced to Robin. Call him yet once more.

[LITTLE JOHN *blows his bugle. All is silent. They stand listening.*]

SCENE III. *A gloomy cell.* ROBIN *bound.* PRINCE JOHN *and two mercenaries. A low narrow door in the background, small barred window on the left.*

* In acting omit text from this point to beginning of Sc. IV, the action of which follows directly after the lighting of the torches.

PRINCE JOHN

[*To the Mercenaries.*]

Leave us a moment. I have private matters
To lay before this friend of all the poor.
You may begin to build the door up now,
So that you do not wall me in with him.
[*The two men begin filling up the doorway with rude blocks of masonry.*]
So now, my good green foot-pad, you are trapped
At last, trapped in the practice of your trade!
Trapped, as you took your stolen Norman gold
To what was it — a widow, or Saxon serf
With eye put out for breaking forest laws?
You hold with them, it seems. Your dainty soul
Sickens at our gross penalties; and so
We'll not inflict them on your noble self,
Although we have the power. There's not a soul
Can ever tell where Robin Hood is gone.
These walls will never echo it.
[*He taps the wall with his sword.*]
And yet
There surely must be finer ways to torture
So fine a soul as yours. Was it not you
Who gave me like a fairing to my brother
With lofty condescension in your eyes;
And shall I call my mercenaries in
And bid them burn your eyes out with hot irons?
Richard is gone — he'll never hear of it!
An Earl that plays the robber disappears,
That's all. Most like he died in some low scuffle
Out in the greenwood. I am half inclined
To call for red-hot irons after all,
So that your sympathy with Saxon churls
May be more deep, you understand; and then
It would be sweet for you, alone and blind,
To know that you could never in this life

See Marian's face again. But no — that's bad,
Bad art to put hope's eyes out. It destroys
Half a man's fear to rob him of his hope.
No; you shall drink the dregs of it. Hope shall die
More exquisite a death. Robin, my friend,
You understand that, when I quit your presence,
This bare blank cell becomes your living tomb.
Do you not comprehend? It's none so hard.
The doorway will be built up. There will be
No door, you understand, but just a wall,
Some six feet thick, of solid masonry.
Nobody will disturb you, even to bring
Water or food. You'll starve — see — like a rat,
Bricked up and buried. But you'll have time to think
Of how I tread a measure at the masque
To-night, with Marian, while her wide eyes wonder
Where Robin is — and old Fitzwalter smiles
And bids his girl be gracious to the Prince
For his land's sake. Ah, ha! you wince at that!
Will you not speak a word before I go?
Speak, damn you!
[*He strikes* Robin *across the face with his glove.* Robin *remains silent.*]
Six days hence, if you keep watch
At yonder window (you'll be hungry then)
You may catch sight of Marian and Prince John
Wandering into the gardens down below.
You will be hungry then; perhaps you'll strive
To call to us, or stretch a meagre arm
Through those strong bars; but then you know the height
Is very great — no voice can reach to the earth:
This is the topmost cell in my Dark Tower.
Men look like ants below there. I shall say
To Marian, See that creature waving there
High up above us, level with the clouds,
Is it not like a winter-shrivelled fly?
And she will laugh; and I will pluck her roses.

And then — and then — there are a hundred ways,
You know, to touch a woman's blood with thoughts
Beyond its lawful limits. Ha! ha! ha!
By God, you almost spoke to me, I think.
Touches at twilight, whispers in the dark,
Sweet sympathetic murmurs o'er the loss
Of her so thoughtless Robin, do you think
Maid Marian will be quite so hard to win
When princes come to woo? There will be none
To interrupt us then. Time will be mine
To practise all the amorous arts of Ovid,
And, at the last —

ROBIN

Will you not free my hands?
You have your sword. But I would like to fight you
Here, with my naked hands. I want no more.

PRINCE JOHN

Ha! ha! At last the sullen speaks.
That's all
I wanted. I have struck you in the face.
Is't not enough? You can't repay that blow.

ROBIN

Bury me down in hell and I'll repay it
The day you die, across your lying mouth
That spoke of my true lady, I will repay it,
Before the face of God!

PRINCE JOHN

[*Laughing.*]
Meanwhile, for me
Till you repay that blow, there is the mouth
Of Marian, the sweet honey-making mouth
That shall forestall your phantom blow with balm.
Oh, you'll go mad too soon if I delay.

I am glad you spoke. Farewell, the masons wait.
And I must not be late for Marian.

[*Exit thro' the small aperture now left in the doorway. It is rapidly closed and sounds of heavy masonry being piled against it are heard.* ROBIN *tries to free his hands and after an effort, succeeds. He hurls himself against the doorway, and finds it hopeless. He turns to the window, peers through it for a moment, then suddenly unwinds a scarf from his neck, ties it to one of the bars and stands to one side.*]

ROBIN

Too high a shot for most of my good bowmen!
What's that? A miss?
[*He looks thro' the window.*]
Good lad, he'll try again!
[*He stands at the side once more and an arrow comes thro' the window.*]
Why, that's like magic!
[*He pulls up the thread attached to it.*]
Softly, or 'twill break! —
Ah, now 'tis sturdy cord.
— I'll make it fast.
But, how to break these bars!
St. Nicholas,
There's someone climbing. He must have a head
Of iron, and the lightness of a cat!
Downward is bad enough, but up is more
Than mortal! Who the devil can it be?
Thank God, it's growing dark. But what a risk!
None of my merry men could e'en attempt it.
I'm very sure it can't be Little John.
What, Shadow-of-a-Leaf!
[SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *appears at the window.*]
'Fore God, dear faithful fool,
I am glad to see you.

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Softly, gossip, softly,
Pull up the rope a little until we break
This bar away — or some kind friend may see
The dangling end below. Now here's a toothpick,
Six inches of grey steel, for you to work with,
And here's another for me. Pick out the mortar!
[*They work to loosen the bars.*]
Wait! Here's a rose I brought you in my cap
And here's a spray of fern! Old Nature's keys
Open all prisons, I'll throw them in for luck,
[*He throws them into the cell and begins working feverishly again.*]
So that the princes of the world may know
The forest let you out. Down there on earth,
If any sees me, they will only think
The creepers are in leaf. Pick out the mortar!
That's how the greenwood works. You know, 'twill thrust
Its tendrils through these big grey stones one day
And pull them down. I noticed in the courtyard
The grass is creeping through the crevices
Already, and yellow dandelions crouch
In all the crumbling corners. Pick it out!
This is a very righteous work indeed
For men in Lincoln green; for what are we
But tendrils of old Nature, herald sprays!
We scarce anticipate. Pick the mortar out.
Quick, there's no time to lose, although to-night
We're in advance of sun and moon and stars
And all the trickling sands in Time's turned glass.
[*With a sudden cry.*]
Richard is dead!

ROBIN

Richard is dead! The King
Is dead!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Ah, dead! Come, pick the mortar out,
Out of the walls of towers and shrines and tombs!
For now Prince John is King, and Lady Marian
In peril, gossip! Yet we are in advance
Of sun and moon to-night, for sweet Prince John
Is not aware yet of his kinglihood,
Or of his brother's death.

ROBIN

[*Pausing a moment.*]
Why, Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
What does this mean?

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Come, pick the mortar out;
You have no time to lose. This very night
My Lady Marian must away to Sherwood.
At any moment the dread word may come
That makes John King of England. Quick, be quick!

ROBIN

She is at the masque to-night!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

Then you must mask
And fetch her thence! Ah, ha, the bar works loose.
Pull it!
[*They pull at the bar, get it free, and throw it into the cell.*]
Now, master, follow me down the rope.
[*Exit* ROBIN *thro' the window.*]

SCENE IV. *Night.*] *The garden of the King's palace (as before), but lighted with torches for the masque. Music swells up and dies away continually. Maskers pass to and fro between the*

palace and the garden. On the broad terrace in front some of them are dancing a galliard.

[PRINCE JOHN *enters and is met by* QUEEN ELINOR, *neither of them masked.*]

ELINOR

All safe?

PRINCE JOHN

Ay, buried and bricked up now, to think
Alone, in the black night, of all I told him.
Thank God, we have heard the last of Robin Hood.

ELINOR

[*She puts on her mask.*]

You are sure?

PRINCE JOHN

I saw him entombed with my own eyes!
Six feet of solid masonry. [Look there,
There's the young knight you've lately made your own.]
Where is my Lady Marian? Ah, I see her!
With that old hypocrite, Fitzwalter.
[*They part.* PRINCE JOHN *puts on his mask as he goes.*]

A LADY

But tell me
Where is Prince John?

A MASKER

That burly-shouldered man
By yonder pillar, talking with old Fitzwalter,
And the masked girl, in green, with red-gold hair,
Is Lady Marian!

THE LADY

Where is Robin Hood?
I have never seen him, but from all one hears

He is a wood-god and a young Apollo,
[And a more chaste Actæon all in one.

MASKER

Oh, ay, he never watched Diana bathing,
Or, if he did, all Sherwood winked at it.
Who knows? Do you believe a man and maid
Can sleep out in the woods all night, as these
Have slept a hundred times, and put to shame
Our first poor parents; throw the apple aside
And float out of their leafy Paradise
Like angels?

LADY

No; I fear the forest boughs
Could tell sad tales. Oh, I imagine it —
Married to Robin, by a fat hedge-priest
Under an altar of hawthorn, with a choir
Of sparrows, and a spray of cuckoo-spit
For holy water! Oh, the modest chime
Of blue-bells from a fairy belfry, a veil
Of evening mist, a robe of golden hair;
A blade of grass for a ring; a band of thieves
In Lincoln green to witness the sweet bans;
A glow-worm for a nuptial taper, a bed
Of rose-leaves, and wild thyme and wood-doves' down.
Quick! Draw the bridal curtains — three tall ferns —
Across the cave mouth, lest a star should peep
And make the wild rose leap into her face!
Pish! A sweet maid! But where is Robin Hood?]

MASKER

I know not; but he'd better have a care
Of Mistress Marian. If I know Prince John
He has marked her for his own.

[LADY

I cannot see

What fascinates him.

MASKER

No, you are right, nor I.]

PRINCE JOHN

Come, Lady Marian, let me lead you out
To tread a measure.

MARIAN

Pray, sir, pardon me!

I am tired.

FITZWALTER

[*Whispering angrily to her.*]

Now, Marian, be not so ungracious.

[You both abuse him and disparage us.
His courtiers led the ladies they did choose.
Do not displease him, girl. I pray you, go!
Dance out your galliard. God's dear holy-bread,
Y'are too forgetful. Dance, or by my troth,
You'll move my patience. I say you do us wrong.]

MARIAN

I will do what you will. [Lead, lead your dance.]

[*Exeunt* JOHN *and* MARIAN.]

[FIRST MASKER

[*To a lady, as they come up from the garden.*]

Will you not let me see your face now, sweet?

LADY

You hurt my lip with that last kiss of yours.
Hush, do not lean your face so close, I pray you;
Loosen my fingers. There's my lord.

FIRST MASKER

Where? Where?
Now, if I know him, I shall know your name!

LADY

That tall man with the damozel in red.

FIRST MASKER

Oh, never fear him. He, too, wore a mask!
I saw them —

[*They pass out talking.*]

SECOND MASKER

[*Looking after them.*]
Saw you those two turtle-doves!

SECOND LADY

Yes.

SECOND MASKER

Come with me, I'll show you where I caught them
Among the roses, half an hour ago.
[*They laugh and exeunt into the gardens.*] *The music swells up and more dancers appear.*]
[*Enter* ROBIN HOOD, *still in his forester's garb, but wearing a mask. He walks as if wounded and in pain. He sits down in the shadow of a pillar watching, and partly concealed from the throng.*]

[THIRD LADY

Remember now to say you did not see me
Here at the masque.

THIRD MASKER

Or shall I say that I
Was out in Palestine?
[*They pass.*] *Enter little* ARTHUR PLANTAGENET. *He comes up to* ROBIN HOOD.]

ARTHUR

Are you not Robin Hood?

ROBIN

Hush, Arthur. Don't you see I wear a mask
Like all the rest to-night?

ARTHUR

Why do they wear
Masks?

ROBIN

They must always wear some sort of mask
At court. Sometimes they wear them all their lives.

ARTHUR

You are jesting, Robin. Now I wanted you
To tell me tales of Sherwood. Tell me how
You saved Will Scarlet.

ROBIN

Why, I've told you that
A score of times.

ARTHUR

I know, I want to hear it
Again. Well, tell me of that afternoon
When Lion-Heart came home from the Crusade.
I have often thought of that. It must have been
Splendid! You weren't expecting it at all?

ROBIN

No, not at all; but, Arthur, tell me first
Have you see Lady Marian?

[ARTHUR

Yes, I saw her
Treading a measure with my Uncle John!]

ROBIN

Stand where you are and watch; and, if you see her,
Beckon her. Then I'll tell you how the King
Came home from the Crusade.

ARTHUR

First, let me tell you
Just how I think it was. It must have been
Like a great picture. All your outlaws there
Sitting around your throne of turf, [and you
Judging the rich and poor. That's how it was
Last night, I dreamed of it; and you were taking
The baron's gold and giving it to the halt
And blind; and then there was a great big light
Between the trees, as if a star had come
Down to the earth and caught among the boughs,
With beams like big soft swords amongst the ferns
And leaves, and through the light a mighty steed
Stepped, and the King came home from the Crusade.
Was it like that? Was there a shining light?

ROBIN

I think there must have been, a blinding light.

ARTHUR

Filling an arch of leaves?]

ROBIN

Yes!

[ARTHUR

That was it!
That's how the King came home from the Crusade.

ROBIN

But there — you've told the story!

ARTHUR

Ah, not all!

ROBIN

No, not quite all. What's that?]
[*The music suddenly stops. The maskers crowd together whispering excitedly.*]

ARTHUR

Why have they stopped
The music? [Ah, there's Hubert. Shall I ask him?

ROBIN

Yes, quickly, and come back!
[ARTHUR *runs up to a masker. Several go by hurriedly.*]

FIRST MASKER

The King is dead!

[SECOND MASKER

Where did it happen? France?

FIRST MASKER

I know not, sir!
[ARTHUR *returns.*]]

ARTHUR

Robin, they say the King is dead! So John
Is king now, is he not?

ROBIN

Ay, John is king!
Now, tell me quickly, use your eyes, my boy,
Where's Lady Marian?

ARTHUR

Ah, there she is at last,
Alone!

ROBIN

Go to her quickly, and bring her hither.
[ARTHUR *runs off and returns with* MARIAN.]

MARIAN

Robin, thank God, you have returned. I feared —

ROBIN

No more, dear heart, you must away to Sherwood!
Shadow-of-a-Leaf is waiting by the orchard
With your white palfrey. Away, or the new king
Will hunt us down. I'll try to gain you time.
Go — quickly!

MARIAN

Robin, your face is white, you are wounded!
What's this — there's blood upon your doublet!
Robin!

ROBIN

Nothing! Go, quickly!

MARIAN

Robin, I cannot leave you.

ROBIN

Go, Marian. If you ever loved me, go.

MARIAN

You'll follow?

ROBIN

Oh, with my last breath I will,
God helping me; but I must gain you time!
Quickly! Here comes the King!

MARIAN

Oh, follow soon!

[*Exit.*]

[ROBIN *sits down again, steadying himself against the pillar.* JOHN *appears* [*at the doors of the palace, above the terrace,*] *a scroll in his hand.*]

JOHN

My friends, the King is dead!

MASKERS

[*Taking off their masks, with a cry.*]
Long live King John!

JOHN

[*Coming down amongst them.*]
Our masque is ended by this grievous news;
But where's my Lady Marian? I had some word
To speak with her! Not here! Why —

ROBIN

[*Still masked, rises and confronts the King, who stares at him and shrinks back a little.*]

All the masks
Are off, sire! No, perhaps they wear them still.

JOHN

Who is this?

ROBIN

One that was dead and lives. You say
Your brother, the great King, is dead. Oh, sire,
If that be so, you'll hear a dead man speak,
For your dead brother's sake. You say the King
Is dead; but you are king. [So the King lives!
You are King of England now from sea to sea,
Is it not so?] Shout, maskers, once again,
Long live the King!

MASKERS

Long live the King!

ROBIN

You see
What power is yours! Your smile is life, your frown
Death. At a word from you the solid earth
Would shake with tramp of armies. [You can call
Thousands to throw away their lives like straws
Upon your side, if any foreign king
Dare to affront you.]
[*He draws nearer to John, who still shrinks a little, as if in fear.*]
Richard, you say, is dead,
And yet, O King, I say that the great King
Lives!
[*He strikes* JOHN *across the face.* JOHN *cowers and staggers back. The* MASKERS *draw their swords, the women scream and rush together.* ROBIN *turns, sword in hand, to confront the* MASKERS.]
Back, fools; for I say that the great King
Lives. [Do not doubt it. Ye have dreamed him dead
How often.] Hark, God in heaven, ye know that voice.
[*A voice is heard drawing nearer thro' the distant darkness of the garden, singing. All listen.* JOHN'S *face whitens.*]

[*Song.*]

Knight, on the narrow way,
Where wouldst thou ride?
"Onward," I heard him say,
"Love, to thy side."

ROBIN

'Tis Blondel! Still vaunt-courier to the King,
As when he burst the bonds of Austria! Listen!

[*Song nearer.*]

"Nay," sang a bird above,
"Stay, for I see
Death, in the mask of love,
Waiting for thee."

MASKERS

[*Resuming their masks and muttering to one another.*]
Can the King live? Is this John's treachery? Look,
He is crushed with fear!

ROBIN

Listen! I'll go to meet him.

[*Exit into the garden.*]

MASKERS

It was the song of Blondel! The same song
He made with Richard, long since! —
Blondel's voice!
Just as we heard it on that summer's night
When Lion-Heart came home from the Crusade.

[*The Song still drawing nearer.*]

"Death! What is Death?" he cried.
"I must ride on,
On to my true love's side,
Up to her throne!"

[*Enter* BLONDEL, *from the garden. He stands, startled by the scene before him.*]

MASKERS

Blondel! Where is the King? Where is the King?

BLONDEL

Did ye not know? — Richard, the King, is dead!

MASKERS

Dead!

JOHN

Dead! And ye let the living dog escape
That dared snarl at our sovereignty. I know him,
Risen from the dead or not. I know 'twas he,
'Twas Robin Hood! After him; hunt him down!
Let him not live to greet another sun.
After him!

MASKERS

[*Drawing their swords and plunging into the darkness.*]
After him; hunt the villain down!

[*Curtain.*]

ACT V

ACT V

SCENE I. *Morning. Sherwood Forest (as before).* LITTLE JOHN *and some of the* OUTLAWS *are gathered together talking. Occasionally they look anxiously toward the cave and at the approaches through the wood.*] *Enter two* FORESTERS, *running and breathless.*

FIRST FORESTER

The King's men! They are scouring thro' the wood,
Two troops of them, five hundred men in each
And more are following.

SECOND FORESTER

We must away from here
And quickly.

[LITTLE JOHN

Where did you sight them?

SECOND FORESTER

From the old elm,
Our watch-tower. They were not five miles away!

FIRST FORESTER

Five, about five. We saw the sunlight flash
Along, at least five hundred men at arms;
And, to the north, along another line,
Bigger, I think; but not so near.]

SECOND FORESTER

Where's Robin?
We must away at once!

FIRST FORESTER

No time to lose!

LITTLE JOHN

His wound is bitter — I know not if we dare
Move him!

FIRST FORESTER

His wound?

LITTLE JOHN

Ay, some damned arrow pierced him
When he escaped last night from the Dark Tower.
He never spoke of it when first he reached us;
And, suddenly, he swooned. [He is asleep
Now. He must not be wakened. They will take
Some time yet ere they thread our forest-maze.

FIRST FORESTER

Not long, by God, not long. They are moving fast.]
[MARIAN *appears* [*at the mouth of the cave. All turn to look at her, expectantly. She seems in distress.*]

MARIAN

He is tossing to and fro. I think his wound
Has taken fever! What can we do?]

FRIAR TUCK

I've sent
A messenger to Kirklee Priory,
Where my old friend the Prioress hath store
Of balms and simples, and hath often helped
A wounded forester. Could we take him there,
Her skill would quickly heal him.

LITTLE JOHN

The time is pressing!

FRIAR TUCK

The lad will not be long!
[ROBIN *appears tottering and white* [*at the mouth of the cave.*]]

MARIAN

[*Running to him.*]
O Robin, Robin,
You must not rise! Your wound!

ROBIN

[*He speaks feverishly.*]
Where can I rest
Better than on my greenwood throne of turf?
[Friar, I heard them say they had some prisoners.
Bring them before me.

FRIAR TUCK

Master, you are fevered,
And they can wait.

ROBIN

Yes, yes; but there are some
That cannot wait, that die for want of food,
And then — the Norman gold will come too late,
Too late.

LITTLE JOHN

O master, you must rest.
[*Going up to him.*]

MARIAN

Oh, help me,
Help me with him. Help me to lead him back.]

ROBIN

No! No! You must not touch me! [I will rest
When I have seen the prisoners, not before.]

LITTLE JOHN

He means it, mistress, better humour him
Or he will break his wound afresh.

MARIAN

O Robin,
Give me your word that you'll go back and rest,
[When you have seen them.]

ROBIN

Yes, I will try, I will try!
But oh, the sunlight! Where better, sweet, than this?
[*She leads him to the throne of turf and he sits down upon it, with* MARIAN *at his side.*]
The Friar is right. This life is wine, red wine,
Under the greenwood boughs! Oh, still to keep it,
One little glen of justice in the midst
Of multitudinous wrong. Who knows? We yet
May leaven the whole world.
[* *Enter the* OUTLAWS, *with several prisoners, among them, a* KNIGHT, *an* ABBOT, *and a* FORESTER.]
These are the prisoners?
You had some victims of the forest laws
That came to you for help. Bring them in, too,
And set them over against these lords of the earth!
[*Some ragged women and children appear. Several serfs with iron collars round their necks and their eyes put out, are led gently in.*]
Is that our Lincoln green among the prisoners?
There? One of my own band?

* In acting omit text from this point to end of scene with prisoners, p. 152.

LITTLE JOHN

Ay, more's the pity!
We took him out of pity, and he has wronged
Our honour, sir; he has wronged a helpless woman
Entrusted to his guidance thro' the forest.

ROBIN

Ever the same, the danger comes from those
We fight for, those below, not those above!
Which of you will betray me to the King?

THE FORESTER

Do you ask *me*, sir?

ROBIN

Judas answered first,
With "Master, is it I?" Hang not thy head!
What say'st thou to this charge?

THE FORESTER

Why, Friar Tuck
Can answer for me. Do you think he cares
Less for a woman's lips than I?

FRIAR TUCK

Cares less,
Thou rotten radish? Nay, but a vast deal more!
God's three best gifts to man,— woman and song
And wine, what dost *thou* know of all their joy?
Thou lean pick-purse of kisses?

ROBIN

Take him out,
Friar, and let him pack his goods and go,
Whither he will. I trust the knave to thee
And thy good quarter-staff, for some five minutes
Before he says "Farewell."

FRIAR

Bring him along,
Give him a quarter-staff, I'll thrash him roundly.
[*He goes out. Two of the* FORESTERS *follow with the prisoner. Others bring the* ABBOT *before* ROBIN.]

ROBIN

Ah! Ha! I know him, the godly usurer
Of York!
We saw a woman beg for alms,
One of the sufferers by the rule which gave
This portly Norman his fat priory
And his abundant lands. We heard him say
That he was helpless, had not one poor coin
To give her, not a scrap of bread! He wears
Purple beneath his cloak: his fine sleek palfrey
Flaunted an Emperor's trappings!

ABBOT

Man, the Church
Must keep her dignity!

ROBIN

[*Pointing to the poor woman, etc.*]
Ay, look at it!
There is your dignity! And you must wear
Silk next your skin to show it. But there was one
You call your Master, and He had not where
To lay His head, save one of these same trees!

ABBOT

Do you blaspheme! I pray you, let me go!
There are grave matters waiting. I am poor!

ROBIN

Look in his purse and see.

ABBOT

[*Hurriedly.*]
I have five marks
In all the world, no more. I'll give them to you!

ROBIN

Look in his purse and see.
[*They pour a heap of gold out of his purse.*]

ROBIN

Five marks, indeed!
Here's, at the least, a hundred marks in gold!

ABBOT

That is my fees, my fees; you must not take them!

ROBIN

The ancient miracle! — five loaves, two small fishes;
And then — of what remained — they gathered up
Twelve basketsful!

ABBOT

Oh, you blaspheming villains!

ROBIN

Abbot, I chance to know how this was wrought,
This miracle; wrought with the blood, anguish and sweat
Of toiling peasants, while the cobwebs clustered
Around your lordly cellars of red wine.
Give him his five and let him go.

ABBOT

[*Going out.*]
The King
Shall hear of this! The King will hunt you down!

ROBIN

And now — the next!

SCARLET

Beseech you, sir, to rest.
Your wound will —

ROBIN

No! The next, show me the next!

SCARLET

This Norman baron —

ROBIN

What, another friend!
Another master of broad territories.
How many homes were burned to make you lord
Of half a shire? What hath he in his purse?

SCARLET

Gold and to spare!

BARON

To keep up mine estate
I need much more.

ROBIN

[*Pointing to the poor.*]
Ay, you need these! these! these!

BARON

[*Protesting.*]
I am not rich.

ROBIN

Look in his purse and see.

BARON

You dogs, the King shall hear of it!

ROBIN

[*Murmuring as if to himself.*]

Five loaves!
And yet, of what remained, they gathered up
Twelve basketsful. The bread of human kindness
Goes far! Oh, I begin to see new meanings
In that old miracle! How much? How much?

SCARLET

Five hundred marks in gold!

ROBIN

[*Half rising and speaking with a sudden passion.*]

His churls are starving,
Starving! Their little children cry for bread!
One of those jewels on his baldric there
Would feed them all in plenty all their lives!
Five loaves — and yet — and yet — of what remained,
The fragments, mark you, twelve great basketsful!

BARON

I am in a madman's power! The man is mad!

ROBIN

Take all he has, all you can get. To-night,
When all is dark (we must have darkness, mind,
For deeds like this) blind creatures will creep out
With groping hands and gaping mouths, lean arms,
And shrivelled bodies, branded, fettered, lame,
Distorted, horrible; and they will weep
Great tears like gouts of blood upon our feet,
And we shall succour them and make them think
(That's if you have not mangled their poor souls

As well, or burned their children with their homes),
We'll try to make them think that some few roods
Of earth are not so bitter as hell might be.
Are you not glad to think of this? Nay — go —
Or else your face will haunt me when I die!
Take him quickly away. The next! The next!
O God!]

[*Flings up his arms and falls fainting.*]

MARIAN

[*Bending over him.*]

O Robin! Robin! Help him quickly.
The wound! The wound!

[*They gather round* ROBIN. [*The* OUTLAWS *come back with the captive* FORESTER, *his pack upon his back.*]

FRIAR TUCK

[*To the* FORESTER.]

Now, get you gone and quickly!
What, what hath happened?

[FRIAR TUCK *and the* OUTLAWS *join the throng round* ROBIN. *The* FORESTER *shakes his fist at them and goes across the glade muttering.*] *The* MESSENGER *from Kirklee Priory comes out of the forest at the same moment* [*and speaks to him, not knowing of his dismissal.*]]

MESSENGER

All's well! Robin can come
To Kirklee. Our old friend the Prioress
Is there, and faithful! They've all balms and simples
To heal a wound.

FORESTER

[*Staring at him.*]

To Kirklee?

MESSENGER

Yes, at sunset,
We'll take him to the borders of the wood
All will be safe.
Where he can steal in easily, alone.

FORESTER

The King's men are at hand!

MESSENGER

Oh, but if we can leave him there, all's safe;
We'll dodge the King's men.

FORESTER

When is he to go?

MESSENGER

[Almost] at once; but he must not steal in
Till sundown, when the nuns are all in chapel.
[How now? What's this? What's this?]
[*He goes across to the throng round* ROBIN.]

[FORESTER

[*Looking after him.*]
Alone, to Kirklee!]

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *A room in Kirklee Priory. A window on the right overlooks a cloister leading up to the chapel door. The forest is seen in the distance, the sun beginning to set behind it. The* PRIORESS *and a* NOVICE *are sitting* [*in a window-seat*] *engaged in broidery work.*

NOVICE

He must be a good man — this Robin Hood!
I long to see him. Father use to say
England had known none like him since the days
Of Hereward the Wake.

PRIORESS

He will be here
By vespers. You shall let him in. Who's that?
Can that be he? It is not sundown yet.
See who is there.
[*Exit* NOVICE. *She returns excitedly.*]

NOVICE

A lady asks to see you!
She is robed like any nun and yet she spoke
Like a great lady — [one that is used to rule
More than obey; and on her breast I saw
A ruby smouldering like a secret fire
Beneath her cloak.] She bade me say she came
On Robin Hood's behest.

PRIORESS

What? Bring her in
Quickly.

[*Exit* NOVICE *and returns with* QUEEN ELINOR *in a nun's garb. At the sign from the* PRIORESS *the* NOVICE retires.]

ELINOR

Madam, I come to beg a favour.
I am a friend of Robin Hood. I have heard —
[One of his Foresters, this very noon
Brought me the news —] that he is sorely wounded;
And purposes to seek your kindly help
At Kirklee Priory.

PRIORESS

Oh, then indeed,
You must be a great friend, for this was kept
Most secret from all others.

ELINOR

A great friend!
He was my page some fifteen years ago,
[And all his life I have watched over him
As if he were my son!] I have come to beg
A favour — let me see him when he comes.
My husband was a soldier, and I am skilled
In wounds. [In Palestine I saved his life
When every leech despaired of it, a wound
Caused by a poisoned arrow.]

PRIORESS

You shall see him.
[I have some skill myself in balms and simples,
But, in these deadlier matters I would fain
Trust to your wider knowledge.]

ELINOR

Let me see him alone;
Alone, you understand. [His mind is fevered.

I have an influence over him.] Do not say
That I am here, or aught that will excite him.
[Better say nothing — lead him gently in,
And leave him. In my hands he is like a child.]

PRIORESS

It shall be done. [I see you are subtly versed
In the poor workings of our mortal minds.

ELINOR

I learnt much from a wise old Eastern leech
When I was out in Palestine.

PRIORESS

I have heard
They have great powers and magic remedies;
They can restore youth to the withered frame.

ELINOR

There is only one thing that they cannot do.

PRIORESS

And what?

ELINOR

They cannot raise the dead.

PRIORESS

Ah, no;
I am most glad to hear you say it, most glad
To know we think alike. That is most true —
Yes — yes — most true; for God alone, dear friend,
Can raise the dead!]

[*A bell begins tolling slowly.*]

The bell for even-song!
You have not long to wait.
[*Shadowy figures of nuns pass the windows and enter the chapel. The sunset deepens.*]

Will you not pray
With me?

[*The* PRIORESS *and* QUEEN ELINOR *kneel down together before a little shrine. Enter the* NOVICE.]

NOVICE

There is a forester at the door.
Mother, I think 'tis he!

PRIORESS

[*Rising.*]
Admit him, then.

ELINOR

Leave me: I will keep praying till he comes.

PRIORESS

You are trembling! You are not afraid?

ELINOR

[*With eyes closed as in strenuous devotion.*]
No; no;
Leave me, I am but praying!

[*A chant swells up in the chapel. Exit* PRIORESS. ELINOR *continues muttering as in prayer. Enter* ROBIN HOOD, *steadying himself on his bow, weak and white. She rises and passes between him and the door to confront him.*]

ELINOR

Ah, Robin, you have come to me at last
For healing. Pretty Marian cannot help you
With all her kisses.

ROBIN HOOD

[*Staring at her wildly.*]
You! I did not know

That you were here. I did not ask your help.
I must go — Marian!
[*He tries to reach the door, but reels in a half faint on the way.* ELINOR *supports him as he pauses, panting for breath.*]

ELINOR

Robin, your heart is hard,
Both to yourself and me. You cannot go,
Rejecting the small help which I can give
As if I were a leper. [Ah, come back.
Are you so unforgiving? God forgives!
Did you not see me praying for your sake?
Think, if you think not of yourself, oh, think
Of Marian — can you leave her clinging arms
Yet, for the cold grave, Robin?] I have risked
Much, life itself, to bring you help this day!
I have some skill in wounds.
[*She holds him closer and brings her face near to his own, looking into his eyes.*]
[Ah, do you know
How slowly, how insidiously this death
Creeps, coil by tightening coil, around a man,
When he is weak as you are? Do you know
How the last subtle coil slips round your throat
And the flat snake-like head lifts up and peers
With cruel eyes of cold, keen inquisition,
Rivetting your own, until the blunt mouth sucks
Your breath out with one long, slow, poisonous kiss?]

ROBIN HOOD

[O God, that nightmare!] Leave me! Let me go!

ELINOR

[You stare at me as if you saw that snake.
Ha! Ha! Your nerves are shaken; you are so weak!]

You cannot go! What! Fainting? Ah, rest here
Upon this couch.
[*She half supports, half thrusts him back to a couch* [*in an alcove out of sight and draws a curtain.*] *There is a knock at the door.*]

ELINOR

Who's there?

PRIORESS

Madam, I came
To know if I could help in anything.

ELINOR

Nothing! His blood runs languidly. It needs
The pricking of a vein to make the heart
Beat, and the sluggish rivers flow. I have brought
A lance for it. I'll let a little blood.
Not over-much; enough, enough to set
The pulses throbbing.

PRIORESS

Maid Marian came with him.
She waits without and asks —

ELINOR

Let her not come
Near him till all is done. Let her not know
Anything, or the old fever will awake.
I'll lance his arm now!
[*The* PRIORESS *closes the door.* [ELINOR *goes into the alcove.*] *The chant from the chapel swells up again.* QUEEN ELINOR [*comes out of the alcove.*] *white and trembling. She speaks in a low whisper as she looks back.*]
Now, trickle down, sweet blood. Grow white, fond lips
That have kissed Marian — [yet, she shall not boast

You kissed her last; for I will have you wake
To the fierce memory of this kiss in heaven
Or burn with it in hell;]
[*She kneels down as if to kiss the face of* ROBIN, [*within. The chant from the chapel swells up more loudly.*] *The door slowly opens.* MARIAN *steals in.* ELINOR *rises and confronts her.*]

ELINOR

[*Laying a hand upon* ROBIN'S *bow beside her.*]
Hush! Do not wake him!

MARIAN

[*In a low voice.*]
What have you done with him?

ELINOR

[*As* MARIAN *advances towards the couch.*]
He is asleep.
Hush! Not a step further! Stay where you are! His life
Hangs on a thread.

MARIAN

Why do you stare upon me?
What have you done? What's this that trickles down —
[*Stoops to the floor and leaps back with a scream.*
It is blood. You have killed him!

ELINOR

[*Seizes the bow and shoots.* MARIAN *falls.*]
[Follow him — down to hell.
King John will find you there.]
[*Exit. The scene grows dark.*]

MARIAN

[*Lifts up her head with a groan.*]
I am dying, Robin!

[O God, I cannot wake him!] Robin! Robin!
[Give me one word to take into the dark!
He will not wake! He will not wake! O God,
Help him!]

[*She falls back unconscious.* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF, a green *spray in his hand, opens the casement and stands for a moment in the window against the last glow of sunset, then enters and runs to the side of* ROBIN.]

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*Hurriedly.*]
Awake, awake, Robin, awake!
The forest waits to help you! All the leaves
Are listening for your bugle. Ah, where is it?
[Let but one echo sound and the wild flowers
Will break thro' these grey walls and the green sprays
Drag down these deadly towers. Wake, Robin, wake,
And let the forest drown the priest's grey song
With happy murmurs.] Robin, the gates are open
For you and Marian! All I had to give
I have given to thrust them open, the dear gates
Of fairyland which I shall never pass
Again. I can no more, I am but a shadow,
Dying as mortals die! It is not I
That calls, not I, but Marian. Hear her voice!
Robin, awake!
O master mine, farewell!
[*Exit lingeringly through the casement.*]

ROBIN

[ROBIN [*is dimly seen in the mouth of the alcove. He*] *stretches out his hands blindly in the dark.*]
Marian! Why do you call to me in dreams?
[Why do you call me? I must go. What's this?]
Help me, kind God, for I must say [one word,

Only one word] — good-bye — to Marian,
To Marian — Ah, too weak, too weak!
[*He sees the dark body of* MARIAN *and utters a cry, falling on his knees beside her.*]
O God,
Marian! Marian!
My bugle! Ah, my bugle!
[*He rises to his feet and, drowning the distant organ-music, he blows a resounding forest-call. It is answered by several in the forest. He falls on his knees by* MARIAN *and takes her in his arms.*]
O Marian, Marian, who hath used thee so?

MARIAN

Robin, it is my death-wound. [Ah, come close.]

ROBIN

Marian, Marian, what have they done to thee?
[*The* OUTLAWS *are heard thundering at the gates with cries.*]

OUTLAWS

Robin! Robin! Robin! Break down the doors.
[*The terrified nuns stream past the window, out of the chapel. The* OUTLAWS *rush into the room. The scene still darkens.*]

SCARLET

Robin and Marian!

[LITTLE JOHN

Christ, what devil's hand
Hath played the butcher here? Quick, hunt them down,
They passed out yonder. Let them not outlive
Our murdered king and queen.

REYNOLD GREENLEAF

O Robin, Robin,
Who shot this bitter shaft into her breast?
[*Several stoop and kneel by the two lovers.*]

ROBIN HOOD

[Speak to me, Marian, speak to me, only speak!
Just one small word, one little loving word
Like those — do you remember? — you have breathed
So many a time and often, against my cheek,
Under the boughs of Sherwood, in the dark
At night, with nothing but the boughs and stars
Between us and the dear God up in heaven!]
O God, why does a man's heart take so long
To break? It would break sooner if you spoke
A word to me, a word, one small kind word.

[MARIAN

Sweetheart!

ROBIN

Sweetheart! You have broken it, broken it! Oh, kind,
Kind heart of Marian!]

MARIAN

Robin, come soon!
[*Dies.*]

ROBIN

Soon, sweetheart! [Oh, her sweet brave soul is gone!]
Marian, I follow quickly!

[SCARLET

God, Kirklee
Shall burn for this!]

LITTLE JOHN

Kirklee shall burn for this!
O master, master, you shall be avenged!

ROBIN

No; let me stand upright! Your hand, good Scarlet!
We have lived our lives and God be thanked we go
Together thro' this darkness. [We shall wake
Please God, together. It is growing darker!
I cannot see your faces.] Give me my bow
Quickly into my hands, for my strength fails
And I must shoot one last shaft on the trail
Of yonder setting sun, never to reach it!
But where this last, last bolt of all my strength,
My hope, my love, shall fall, there bury us both,
Together, and tread the green turf over us!
The bow!

[SCARLET *hands him his bow. He stands against the faint glow of the window, draws the bow to full length, shoots and falls back into the arms of* LITTLE JOHN.]

LITTLE JOHN

[*Laying him down.*]

[Weep, England, for thine outlawed lover,
Dear Robin Hood, the poor man's friend, is dead.]

[*The scene becomes quite dark. Then out of the darkness, and as if at a distance, the voice of* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *is heard singing the fairy song of the first scene. The fairy glade in Sherwood begins to be visible in the gloom by the soft light of the ivory gates which are swinging open once more among the ferns. As the scene grows clearer the song of* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *grows more and more triumphant and is gradually caught up by the chorus of the fairy host within the woods.*]

[*Song of* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF]

I

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
The world begins again!
And O, the red of the roses,
And the rush of the healing rain!

II

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
The Princess wakes from sleep;
For the soft green keys of the wood-land
Have opened her donjon-keep!

III

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
Their grey walls hemmed us round;
But, under my greenwood oceans,
Their castles are trampled and drowned.

IV

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
My green sprays climbed on high,
And the ivy laid hold on their turrets
And haled them down from the sky!

V

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
They were strong! They are overthrown!
For the little soft hands of the wild-flowers
Have broken them, stone by stone.

VI

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
Though Robin lie dead, lie dead,
And the green turf by Kirklee
Lie light over Marian's head,

VII

Green ferns on the crimson sky-line,
What bugle have you heard?
Was it only the peal of the blue-bells,
Was it only the call of a bird?

VIII

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
The rose o'er the fortalice floats!
My nightingales chant in their chapels,
My lilies have bridged their moats!

IX

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
King Death, in the light of the sun,
Shrinks like an elfin shadow!
His reign is over and done!

X

The hawthorn whitens the wood-land;
My lovers, awake, awake,
Shake off the grass-green coverlet,
Glide, bare-foot, thro' the brake!

XI

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
And, under the great green boughs,
I have found out a place for my lovers,
I have built them a beautiful house.

XII

Green ferns in the dawn-red dew-fall,
This gift by my death I give,—
They shall wander immortal thro' Sherwood!
In my great green house they shall live!

XIII

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
When the first wind blows from the South,
They shall meet by the Gates of Faërie!
She shall set her mouth to his mouth!

XIV

He shall gather her, fold her and keep her;
They shall pass thro' the Gates, they shall live!
For the Forest, the Forest has conquered!
This gift by my death I give!

XV

The Forest has conquered! The Forest has conquered!
The Forest has conquered!
The world awakes anew;
And O, the scent of the hawthorn,
And the drip of the healing dew!

[*The song ceases.* TITANIA *and* OBERON *come out into the moonlit glade.*]

OBERON

Yet one night more the gates of fairyland
Are opened by a mortal's kindly deed.
But Robin Hood and Marian now are driven
As we shall soon be driven, from the world
Of cruel mortals.

TITANIA

Mortals call them dead;
Oberon, what is death?

OBERON

Only a sleep.
But these may dream their happy dreams in death
Before they wake to that new lovely life
Beyond the shadows; for poor Shadow-of-a-Leaf
Has given them this by love's eternal law
Of sacrifice, and they shall enter in
To dream their lover's dream in fairyland.

TITANIA

And Shadow-of-a-Leaf?

OBERON

He cannot enter now.
The gates are closed against him.

TITANIA

But is this
For ever?

OBERON

We fairies have not known or heard
What waits for those who, like this wandering Fool,

Throw all away for love. But I have heard
There is a great King, out beyond the world,
Not Richard, who is dead, nor yet King John;
But a great King who one day will come home
Clothed with the clouds of heaven from His Crusade.

TITANIA

The great King!

[OBERON

Hush, the poor dark mortals come!

[*The crowd of serfs, old men, poor women, and children, begin to enter as the fairy song swells up within the gates again.* ROBIN *and* MARIAN *are led along by a crowd of fairies at the end of the procession.*]

TITANIA

And there, see, there come Robin and his bride.
And the fairies lead them on, strewing their path
With ferns and moon-flowers. See, they have entered in!
[*The last fairy vanishes thro' the gates.*]]

OBERON

And we must follow, for the gates may close
For ever now. Hundreds of years may pass
Before another mortal gives his life
To help the poor and needy.

[OBERON *and* TITANIA *follow hand in hand thro' the gates. They begin to close.* SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF *steals wistfully and hesitatingly across, as if to enter. They close in his face. He goes up to them and leans against them sobbing, a small green figure, looking like a greenwood spray against their soft ivory glow. The fairy music dies. He sinks to his knees and holds up his hands.* [*Immedi-*

ately a voice is heard singing and drawing nearer thro' the forest.]

[*Song — drawing nearer.*]

Knight on the narrow way,
Where wouldst thou ride?
"Onward," I heard him say,
"Love, to thy side!"
"Nay," sang a bird above,
"Stay, for I see
Death in the mask of love
Waiting for thee."

[*Enter* BLONDEL, *leading a great white steed. He stops and looks at the kneeling figure.*]

BLONDEL

Shadow-of-a-Leaf!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*Rising to his feet.*]
Blondel!

BLONDEL

I go to seek
My King!

SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF

[*In passionate grief.*]
The King is dead!

BLONDEL

[*In yet more passionate joy and triumph.*]
The great King lives!
[*Then more tenderly.*]
Will you not come and look for Him with me?

[*They go slowly together through the forest and are lost to sight.* BLONDEL'S *voice is heard singing the*

third stanza of the song in the distance, further and further away.]

"Death? What is Death?" he cried.

"I must ride on!"]

[*Curtain.*]

DIRECTIONS FOR PRODUCTION

DIRECTIONS FOR PRODUCTION

FOREWORD

"Sherwood," as a literary composition, contains so much that is beautiful and significant in history and legend; as a play so much opportunity for exquisite blending of music, light, costume, scenic effect, and vigorous yet poetic acting, that the work should prove of great service to any school or college looking for permanent values to the cultural life of the institution. This stage version has been made with the hope that the producing success already achieved in many schools and colleges will be realized in many more.

Practical experience has demonstrated that the textual cuts, the stage directions, the suggestions for costuming and scenic detail of this edition best serve the needs of average conditions. Brackets indicate all cuts so as to preserve the integrity of the original. Necessary stage directions follow, each page taken in order. The beauty and force of the lines furnish their own directions as to when a character shall "register" fear, love, hate, awe, tenderness, etc. Only such other directions are made as, from experience, will prove helpful. It is impossible, in an appendix, to make every direction as clear and as explicit as a text annotated with comment and diagrams. But nothing must be done to detract from the poetic charm of the text. Besides, each director will want to use his or her own conception of detailed treatment and to mould the action according to local conditions.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

The play may be produced, in this edition, within two hours and a half, including intermissions, from overture to final curtain. It may be produced in a city theatre,

out-of-doors, or in a school auditorium. If given in a city theatre, avoid, as far as possible, using the conventional scenery; that is, any old-fashioned "wood wings" and "drops." Use scenery that is simple and suggestive, augmenting it with actual trees and vines. Avoid wings with crude outlines or too strongly marked color effects. For a back drop prefer one with a minimum of woods and a maximum of sky, so that the play of lights can create the illusion of changing time. If given out-of-doors, clear an opening so that two rows of trees will face each other, masking off each side down stage with bushes. If there is no natural vista up stage, create one with shrubbery. Effective stage lighting may be secured by artfully placed electric lights, shielded with cones throwing the lights away from the audience. The disposition of these lights will depend entirely upon a careful study of local conditions. They must be so placed as to give sufficient light upon the characters in action and yet create natural shadows. If a background of an ascending rocky slope is available, so much the better both for proper effect and for artistic stage entrances.

The foot lights, of course, may be stretched across the level space down stage. If the average school stage is used, one on which practically all scenery must be built, either resort to gray or blue screens and a solid blue back drop, with just a suggestion of woods secured by shrubbery, the whole played upon by proper lighting, or bring into use all the trees and shrubbery which will make a realistic forest scene. In any case a stage opening at least thirty feet wide by twenty-five or thirty feet deep is necessary. The height, from floor to flies, should be fifteen feet.

The expenses of the production will vary according to circumstances. In general they comprise theatre rental, dress rehearsal, lights, costumes, orchestra hire, make-up work, advertising, programs, and rental of text and music. A general idea of average cost may be gathered from the following figures compiled from the production of this

play as given in Trenton, N. J., in 1915. Some of the items would no doubt be doubled to-day.

Theatre rental (two performances)	$250.00
Dress rehearsals (stage hands and lights)	30.00
Costumes	130.00
Orchestra hire	60.00
Make-up work	25.00
Extras, including copies of text and Royalty [1] for performance	80.00
	$575.00

Even with the cost of production to-day undoubtedly advanced, some of these items will be larger or smaller according to local conditions. The theatre rental will vary according to the city and size of the theatre. If given out-of-doors or in the school auditorium that item will be saved. Costume firms charge on varying scales according to the simplicity or ornateness of the material. Of course many costumes may be made. The costumes for this production were quite accurate and ample. Some school orchestras will be able to play the music composed for this play. Others will be entirely inadequate and some will have to be augmented. If programs are printed to allow for paid advertising, the entire cost of advertising — window display cards, tickets, posters, etc., may be met.

The above scale of expenses covers the outlay necessary for a typical high school production of the play. A more pretentious, out-of-door performance called for under average college conditions, and involving special problems of lighting, seating, etc., and possibly the engaging of a professional director, may cost several times this amount.

For production purposes a re-naming of the acts has been found desirable, designating Acts I and II as Prologue and Epilogue as follows:

[1] Application for permission to produce the play, with full particulars of conditions of performance, must be made to the Paget Literary Agency, 500 Fifth Ave., New York City.

THE PROLOGUE, *The Forest,* pages 3–16; ACT I, *Banqueting Hall of Fitzwalter's Castle,* pages 17–43; ACT II, Scene 1, *The Forest,* pages 47–74; Scene 2, *The Forest,* pages 77–104; ACT III, *Garden of the King's Palace,* pages 107–153; THE EPILOGUE, *The Priory and the Forest,* pages 154–169.

It is understood, of course, that for class study purposes the arrangement of the play as devised by the author should not be changed.

There are many useful books on the market which aid the amateur director, especially for a play of this character. At least these three should be in the hands of every producer: "Practical Stage Directions for Amateurs," Taylor, *E. P. Dutton and Co.,* New York; "Costumes and Scenery for Amateurs," Mackay, *Henry Holt & Co.,* New York; "How to Produce Amateur Plays," Clark, *Little, Brown & Co.,* Boston. "Community Drama and Pageantry," Beegle and Crawford, *Yale University Press,* is also an excellent text with many practical suggestions for costumes, lighting, dancing, music, and all out-of-door conditions. Numerous pictures add greatly to its value.

STAGE SETTINGS

The scenery requirements are two interiors (a Castle Hall and a Priory), and two exteriors (a Forest and a Palace Garden). Stage diagrams for each scene are shown on pages 180 and 181.

The Prologue — Pages 3–16

The Forest

As indicated in the diagram, make a light wooden fence about four feet high, paint it white, and festoon it with vines. Extend the fence across stage about a fourth of the way down stage from the rear drop. The rear drop should represent the depth of the forest. The center of the fence should be broken by a high double gate, of scroll design, gilded. It should be at least ten feet high and made to swing up stage.

Act I — Pages 17–43

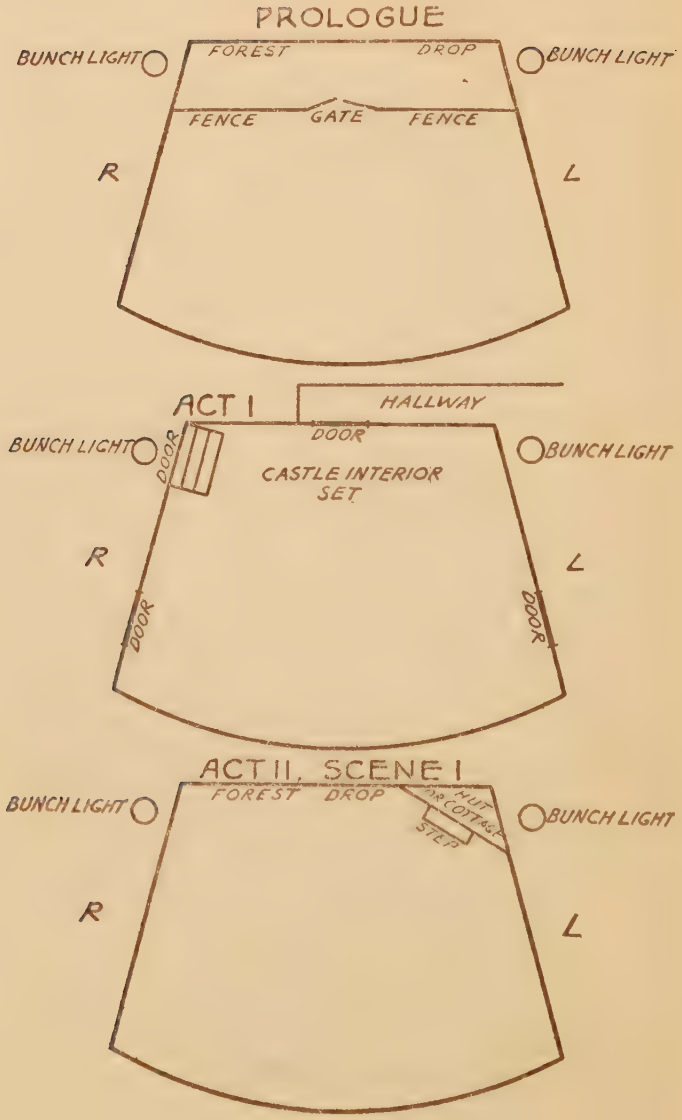
Banqueting Hall of Fitzwalter's Castle

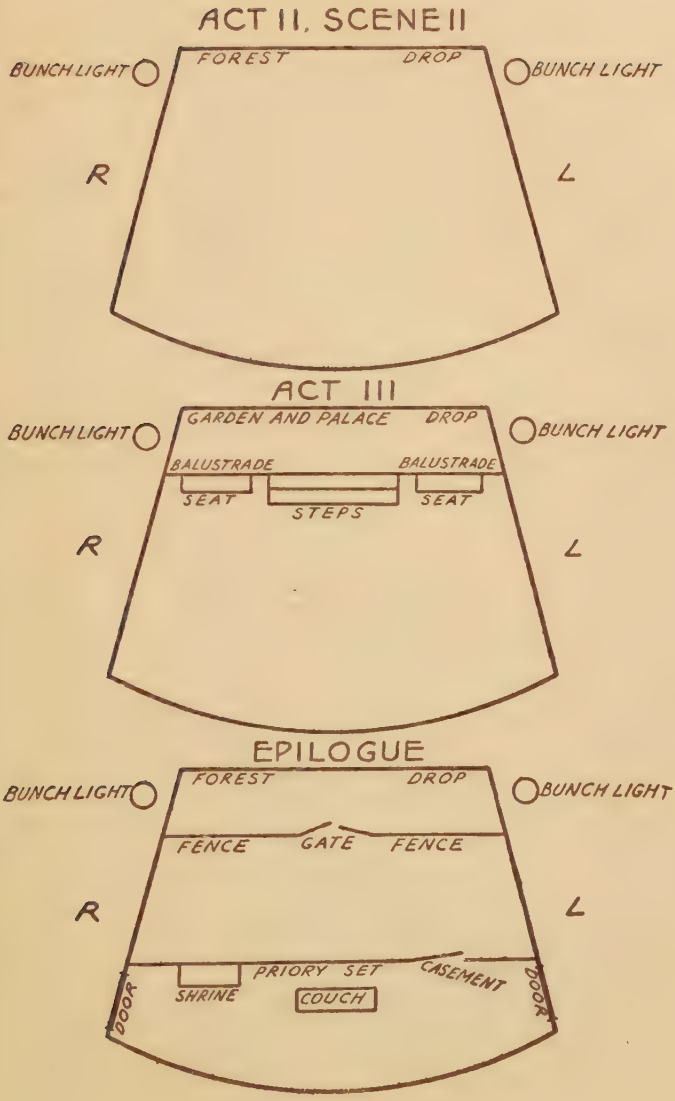
The banqueting hall is most effective if treated simply; little furniture but accurate in design, plain but richly colored hangings, and the walls of a tone color that does not jar. Preferably use a stage set of paneled wood with brown or dark red hangings. The banquet table may be entirely omitted, as it will interfere with the action. The steps indicated in the diagram lead to Marian's room. Obviously the furniture should be medieval in character. It is a good plan to solicit the aid of the proprietor of a furniture store which specializes in period decoration and to give him the opportunity of setting this act appropriately, in return for the advantage of advertising. Once you determine on the stage set you will use — often limited by the conditions of the theatre — the decorator can then determine what furniture and hangings will secure the best effect. However, do not permit him to overload the stage with furniture or to use odd pieces.

Act II — Scene 1 — Pages 47–74

The Forest

The setting for this scene may be the same as for The Prologue, save that the fence and gates are out. If possible use a different forest back drop. All references to


PROLOGUE
BUNCH LIGHT
FOREST
DROP
BUNCH LIGHT
FENCE
GATE
FENCE
R
L
ACT I
HALLWAY
DOOR
BUNCH LIGHT
DOOR
CASTLE INTERIOR SET
BUNCH LIGHT
R
L
DOOR
DOOR
ACT II, SCENE I
BUNCH LIGHT
FOREST
DROP
HUT OR COTTAGE
STEPS
BUNCH LIGHT
R
L


ACT II, SCENE II
BUNCH LIGHT
FOREST
DROP
BUNCH LIGHT
R
L
ACT III
BUNCH LIGHT
GARDEN AND PALACE
DROP
BUNCH LIGHT
BALUSTRADE
BALUSTRADE
SEAT
STEPS
SEAT
R
L
EPILOGUE
BUNCH LIGHT
FOREST
DROP
BUNCH LIGHT
FENCE
GATE
FENCE
R
L
PRIORY SET
CASEMENT
SHRINE
COUCH
DOOR
DOOR

the "cave" mean the "hut." The front of the hut, with door C, shows on stage as indicated in the diagram. Most theatres possess among their stock properties, a hut or cottage. This usually consists merely of "flats" or canvas on frames, painted to resemble a rustic cottage, and held in place by stage braces. The door should be practical but windows need not be. If the theatre does not have one, the stage carpenter or manual training department of the school can easily make one. The appearance of the hut may be enhanced with a few plants about the doorway, and a few trailing vines.

Act II — Scene 2 — Pages 77–104

The Forest

The setting for this scene is the same as for Scene 1, save that the hut is removed. A change in forest back drop, if possible, would, of course, be more in keeping with the place indicated.

Act III — Pages 107–153

Garden of the King's Palace

The rear drop should show the vista of a garden with a castle. Up stage may be elevated by a platform running a quarter of the way down stage, the front edge of it faced by a balustrade three feet high with opening in the middle. Two seats should be placed against the balustrade, conforming in design to that of the balustrade. See diagram.

The Epilogue — Pages 154–169

The Priory and The Forest

The stage for The Epilogue must be set up as for The Prologue — drop, forest scene, fence and gate. Down stage, as indicated in the diagram, set up a plain, dark interior to resemble a priory. Furnishings should be simple — prayer-desk, couch covered with material in harmony with the wall or hangings. The window should be

made casement in design, to swing outward, and it is most important that this setting be so contrived that it can be removed very quickly and silently for the change to the final scene.

LIGHTING

The lighting of this beautiful play is an essential feature of the production and requires some thought and care. If the play is given out-of-doors the lighting will depend entirely upon local conditions. Under the discussion of "General Conditions" some suggestions for out-of-door lighting are offered. Indoors, foot lights, borders, bunch and spot lights are needed. The general caution, however, should be given not to use too much light. In the foot lights take out here and there several lamps and secure better effects by higher-powered lamps. Use fewer but larger lamps in the bunch lights, and substitute colored silk, if possible, for the old gelatin frames, or one of the newer devices which may be purchased from theatrical supply houses. The border lights may be improved by substituting for the long rows of lamps a few larger lamps covered with cone-shaped globes. Any tinsmith can make them, and paint them white inside, although porcelain-lined shields are better. This applies also to the foot lights.

For The Prologue, bunch lights may be used R and L off stage behind the fence. Spot light may be used from the rear of the balcony of the theatre, but judiciously, and only when it will actually focus attention in dramatic necessity, *never for mere theatrical effect.*

The house should be darkened before the overture, to establish the atmosphere of the play. The rise of the curtain should show the stage absolutely dark back of the gate. If necessary, suspend a transparency in front of the gate and fence which becomes invisible when bunch lights come on. Down stage should give the effect of faint moonlight. This may be secured by greens and ambers in the border lights and blues in the foot lights. Bring

up the bunch lights slowly on the entrance of the fairies, so as to create the effect of a fairy world growing out of the forest. A spot light in the balcony may play on the fairies as they dance, if desired. If their costumes are white, use colored lights. Raise curtain promptly on last note of overture.

The lighting of Act I, *The Banqueting Hall,* represents late afternoon. First, use all ambers in the foots and borders, blending off into reds with tinges of greens and blues. However, do not use these too strongly, because, as indicated in " Acting Directions," the bunch lights will develop the moonlight which eventually streams in from the hallway. At this point the other lights may be dimmed down until they are hardly visible.

For Act II, Scene 1, *The Forest,* we again have a sunset scene, with the same effects employed as in Act I, the same dimming process, and the same use of the bunch lights.

The lighting for Act II, Scene 2, *The Forest,* indicates the middle of the day, with full amber lights on in all lighting devices.

The hour is sunset, in Act III, *The Garden of the King's Palace.* Use the same treatment of lights as in Act I, later effecting strong moonlight in the two bunch lights up stage. If gelatin frames are used, place first ambers in the frames, then slide in the reds as the ambers are removed. Then insert blues as the reds are removed, and then the greens as the blues are removed. It may be necessary, however, to retain the blues with the greens. An effective additional device is to festoon lines of odd-shaped lanterns in the flies, all wired with lights, ready to be lowered to view when Prince John enters to begin the festivities.

The lighting for The Epilogue should be placed as indicated in The Prologue. For *The Priory* scene down stage use reds to indicate subdued light. Additional notes may be found under ACTING DIRECTIONS, THE EPILOGUE.

PROPERTIES

For The Prologue the essential properties consist of the fence, gate, vines, plants, swords, canes, fern, sacks, wands, and a donkey. The donkey is quite "practical." With practice he may be enticed across the stage. All these properties may either be made in the manual training department of any school, or easily borrowed or procured.

The properties for Act I are swords, lances, a candle, a staff, a cloak, a paper, a bugle, table and chairs, couch and cushions, and steps.

For Act II, Scene 1, are necessary flowers, cloaks, a paper, a staff, swords, lances, wands, a harp (to be carried in the hand — easily made), fern, a bugle, a cottage, piano off stage, seats, and a horse. The horse is also "practical," but will need more practice than the donkey.

Properties for Act II, Scene 2, are a staff, a bugle, the harp, the horse, plates, swords, lances, bows and arrows, a comb, daggers, tables, seats, grass mats, fruit, cakes, and mugs.

For Act III there will be needed lanterns with wiring, a paper, swords, a wand, a staff, the harp, balustrades, seats, steps, dominoes, and piano off stage.

For The Epilogue the necessary properties in *The Priory* are chairs, a shrine or prayer desk, couch with cover, a bell, organ off stage, a bugle, bow and arrows, and a dagger; and for *The Forest* up-stage the gate, fence, vines, and plants.

MUSIC

Very competent and beautiful music has been composed for this edition by Mr. Edward A. Mueller, whose published works are well-known. Both piano and full orchestral score may be secured by applying to him at his address, 23 Prospect Street, Trenton, New Jersey. Following is a list of the numbers, with the composer's suggestions:

While the music for "Sherwood" is classic in form and standard, it is not difficult technically for singer or player. The director of the music should have sound musical judg-

ment and experience, as it is in the ensemble of orchestra and voices that difficulties are encountered, whether the performers be professional or amateur.

The piano and vocal score includes the following numbers:

Overture and Fairies' Chorus: The Fairies' Chorus is written for female voices, in four parts. If necessary, the chorus sections may be given with two parts only, or even the melody in unison. The greater part of this number is a duet that will be most effective with four or six voices, although two singers can render it.

The Fairies' Dance: This is a waltz in slow tempo.

Blondel's Song: This song is in minor, in ancient ballad style with a light arpeggio accompaniment, in imitation of the harp, and is followed by a recitative without accompaniment. It can be sung equally well by alto or baritone, and demands a stable, true voice.

Alan-a-Dale's Song: For baritone.

Gavotte: Use "La Cinquintaine," by Gabriel-Marie.

Miserere: This number, produced back stage in the Kirklee Priory scene, is written for reed organ and three parts for female voices.

Music for Death Scene of Robin Hood: This is incidental music, directions for which will be found on the score; also under ACTING DIRECTIONS, THE EPILOGUE.

Death Song of Shadow-of-a-Leaf: This song for soprano or mezzo is short and in dramatic recitative form.

The orchestral score includes above numbers and entrances, exits, and curtain finales not designated in the piano and vocal score. The scoring calls for First and Second Violins, Viola, 'Cello, Bass, Oboe, Flute, Clarinet, Cornet, Trombone, Tympani, and Piano. The parts may be reduced at the discretion of the orchestra leader.

COSTUMES AND MAKE-UP

In a play of this character most of the costumes should be rented. Most costuming houses will be able to furnish

costumes well adapted for the period of the play,— Robin Hood's, the foresters', the Friar's gown, and those for the lords and ladies, the King, Prince, and Queen. Careful directions should be given the costumer as to the exact nature of the play, and absolutely correct measurements be given. Be careful about the size of hats and shoes. Be sure that the costumes vary in design and color scheme and blend with the setting. Obviously the costumes of the lords and ladies should be rich in velvets and laces, the foresters' in green, the Friar's brown, the nuns' black (easily made), the rustics' brown or gray, the fairies' white, and the old men nondescript. The costume of Shadow-of-a-Leaf may be motley.

Many of the costumes can easily be made from paper patterns. A good fairy costume may be made of cheese cloth, three yards of tarlatan, three yards of wire for wings, two dozen gems, and a little silver dust.

In addition to making all the fairies' costumes, money may be saved by making or borrowing the swords, lances, wands, crowns, ornaments and bows and arrows.

The make-up work should be in the hands of an expert. Avoid all exaggeration. A black wig and beard should be provided for the Sheriff, a white wig for Fitzwalter, a red wig for Much, and a brown one for the Friar.

Lack of space does not permit any detailed instructions as to what to do if no competent make-up man is available. Ample information is furnished in the books suggested. With the changes in lighting schemes on the modern stage, make-up work has followed accordingly. A good general principle is to try to secure the same effect on the stage as for the natural light of the street. In this way all exaggeration will be avoided. It is a good plan to observe in real life the same type of character you wish to affect on the stage and apply the make-up accordingly. This takes careful observation and some practice, but it can be done by the skillful amateur.

THE CAST

The cast of "Sherwood" should be chosen with care, particularly the characters of Robin Hood, Prince John, Queen Elinor, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, Much, Little John, the Friar, Richard, Oberon, Titania, Fitzwalter, and Marian. The best way to secure an accurately chosen cast is to conduct trials. First, study the text carefully until each character is clearly outlined in your own mind. Think of these characters in terms of all possible available material in the school. By availability is meant not only fitness for the part,— appearance, size, voice, personality, good memory, and mental alertness, but also aptness to take direction, punctuality, industry, and a proper spirit of team work. In order to obtain the first qualities mentioned it may be necessary to sacrifice some of the others, and make the best of it. This means harder work for the director and the exercise of patience and persistence. Often it may be necessary to exclude from the cast those whose temperaments make it impossible to work with them without handicapping the good work of others.

After all available material is fixed in mind as a result of careful study of the text, and every elimination made, call a meeting of this prospective cast. Read the play, or certain important sections of it, to them, commenting on the characteristics of each person in the play as you read, trying to give them an insight into all the matters of voice, interpretation, and mental and spiritual qualities they manifest. Then take some one act, choose those you have first in mind, give them copies, and have them read an act or certain scenes, on the stage. Watch closely the readiness with which they adapt themselves to the part. If, on repeated suggestion, certain ones fail to grasp the part, substitute others, until, after repeated trials, your final cast is chosen.

All the students should, in the first place, have a clear understanding that they may or may not be chosen. Tact,

amiability, and sincerity on the part of the director ought to be able to create this state of mind, if the school has anything like the proper spirit of team work and cooperation to make the play a real success. Often many students not chosen finally will be willing to serve as understudies, coming faithfully to rehearsals, filling in during necessary absences, and thus make themselves available in the event of unexpected illness, falling back in academic work, etc.

This beautiful play, clearly defined in atmosphere, and rich with interesting personalities, shows *Robin Hood* as a man of broad sympathies, poetic mind, and a personality gentle, proud, vigorous, and noble. His enactor should have grace and a well-proportioned body. *John* is arrogant, supercilious, crafty, and selfish. He should be portrayed by a tall, dark-complexioned person. *Queen Elinor* should be well-built, and should have a flexible voice, capable of shifting from hate and anger to sophistry and ingratiating charm. *Shadow-of-a-Leaf* needs most careful choosing. Nimble, versatile as to voice and personality, poetic, eccentric, human, amiable, grave, foolish, commanding, he needs utmost attention. Often a girl can enact the part better than a boy. *Much* has all the qualities of the clown. *Little John* should, of course, be as immense as possible. *Friar Tuck* is fat, rollicking, human, and sincere. *Richard,* a tall, fair-haired man, is the soul of graciousness, dignity, kindness, and of commanding, righteous anger. *Oberon* and *Titania* should cultivate the charm of other-world characteristics,— wistful, mildly-declamatory in style, sweet, pathetic in interpretation. *Fitzwalter* may be an old man, childish, inconsistent, craven, affected, somewhat blusterous, but with some native affection. *Marian* is the embodiment of everything womanly, the woman of "high degree." She has charm, a fascinating voice and manner, and a wealth of exquisite variability of temperament,— sweetness, affection, imperious hauteur, leadership, yet complete and wholly disarming graciousness in affection.

A word of caution about doubling parts. If all the characters are available, of course employ them. It simplifies stage entrance and costume changing, besides enhancing the interest in the play from all points of view. If it is necessary to double any parts, be sure that the persons chosen are versatile enough to enact the different rôles. Note the directions carefully about stage entrances and intervals of time so as to permit of costume change and changes of position in stage entrance. In addition to the stage director and prompter some one person should be utilized whose sole business it is to see that these changes are made, the persons in proper position for stage entrance and in ample time, and to have in their possession all the articles they will use in the action. Following are suggestions for doubling when necessary:

Alan-a-Dale and *Blondel* may be enacted by one person.

Little John may also enact the *Serf,* page 3, and take the lines of the *First Rustic,* page 77, *Greenleaf,* page 102, the *Second Forester,* page 143, and the *Forester,* pages 152–153.

Will Scarlet may take the lines of the *First Old Man,* pages 9–14, the *Masker,* page 128, and the *Messenger,* page 152.

Much may enact the *Blind Man,* pages 9–12, the *Forester,* pages 152–153, *Greenleaf,* page 102, *Arthur,* pages 131–135, and the *First Forester,* page 143.

The *Friar* may also speak the lines of the *Second* and *Third Rustics,* pages 77–83.

The *First* and *Second Woman* and the *Child,* pages 9–12, the *Lady,* page 128, and the *Prioress,* pages 154–159, may be enacted by one person.

Widow Scarlet and the *Novice,* page 159, may also be taken by one person.

Orchis, pages 68–69, may take the lines of the *Fairy,* page 70.

Lords and *Foresters, Ladies* and *Fairies,* may interchange.

The characters of *Oberon, Orchis, Puck,* and *Shadow-of-a-Leaf* may be taken by girls.

"Sherwood" demands careful attention to details. There should be no misfits. There is such a slight gap between poetry and banality, between enchantment and the commonplace, that it should be undertaken in all seriousness with a full consciousness of all the attention to detail involved. This means well-thought-out construction as to cast, costumes, lighting, music, scenery, properties, rehearsals, advertising, and the final goal to be reached; namely, the production of a play which because of its great beauty and force should live in the minds of all who share in the enterprise as the rarest occasion in their school lives.

ACTING DIRECTIONS

The Prologue — Pages 3–16

The Forest

The following enter R: the *Serf, Old Man, Old Woman, Blind Man, Sheriff* and *Men, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, Little John.*

The following enter L: *Prince John* and his *Men.*

The following enter C: *Titania, Oberon, Puck, Fairies.*

Page 3. Make the initial entrance striking and dramatic. Strike the note of John's character at once — cruelty, arrogance. Every word and gesture must carry. The Serf's abject behavior should be marked. He throws himself at the feet of Prince John, the Sheriff endeavoring to restrain him. Be careful of a balanced stage picture, — the kneeling Serf with the Sheriff and his men, and the Prince with his men.

Page 5. John turns to go on the line "Take him off," but turns on the phrase "But wait."

Page 6. As the Serf is taken away, R, his words and cries trail off into distance as John converses indifferently with the Sheriff.

Page 8. A more dramatic effect can be secured if the Serf suddenly appears, R, struggling with his men with-

out a cry, as John is engrossed in his plans, rushes at John, but is killed just as he utters a cry of exultation. Pause before John's comment, and the Sheriff's statement. John's "I am sorry" should be quite casual. Exeunt L.

Page 9. Only three characters required, an Old Man, a Woman, and a Blind Man, though more may be used if available. Slight pause before their entrance R. The pathos of this scene should contrast sharply with the previous scene. The Woman takes the Child's lines, substituting "Oh," for the word "Mother."

Page 10. The Old Man should drag the body off as the Blind Man potters about.

Page 11. Little John and Shadow-of-a-Leaf enter R. The donkey may be decorated with flowers and fern. Shadow-of-a-Leaf should walk him slowly across stage, pausing and talking to him. It can be done.

Page 13. Shadow-of-a-Leaf exits L, his "Hosannas" dying away in the distance, while his hearers listen a moment.

Page 14. Little John exits L, the Old Man R. After a pause the lights come up in the bunch lights, gradually revealing the fence and gate into Fairyland, with Titania and Oberon just behind. They come down C to the music of the Overture repeated.

Page 15. When Titania says, "See, they come!" she and Oberon come down L C, as the Fairies enter through the gates from either side and down stage in the dance. Shadow-of-a-Leaf may reenter and stand with Puck down R C, opposite. Titania, Oberon, Puck, and Shadow-of-a-Leaf may dance in the center in III. Following are directions for the dance and chorus:

There should be sixteen in the group. Fairies enter gate in introduction, second measure.

I. Introduction. Four abreast at gate,—

4444
3333
2222
1111

a. Step forward with outside foot, raising heel, holding three counts (inside foot extended backward, arms in fourth position).

b. Waltz step forward, beginning inside foot. (Step, slide, close.)

4444
3333
22 22
11 11

Repeat a.

c. Repeat b. waltz step for first eight being taken to side, rear eight advancing forward, forming two rows of eight across stage,—

22444422
11333311

Repeat a. and c.

d. Step to outside and *pirouette,* arms sixth position.

II. Dance.

a. Beginning outside foot, six waltz balance step forward, arms in fifth position.

b. Step and *pirouette* outside, arms in sixth position.

c. Six waltz balance step backward, arms in third position. Repeat b.

Repeat all of II, with alternate lines advancing forward and then backward, and others in opposite directions with rows three and four keeping back stage.

III. Forming groups of four in a semicircle, Principals coming across in front to form central group, groups moving in circles.

44 44
33 33
22 22
11 pp 11
pp

a. Eight waltz steps with arms crossed in center.
b. Eight waltz steps changing direction.
c. Eight waltz steps facing inside with hands joined.
d. Six waltz steps facing outside with hands joined.

Finish in large semicircle with Principals center.

IV. Chorus sways right and left.

a. Two each direction; four *pas-de-basque* in semicircle meeting across back of stage (four measures).
b. Step to right and *pirouette;* step left and *pirouette* (four measures).
c. Titania and Shadow three steps diagonally forward and point. Oberon and Puck three steps forward diagonally crossing in back of Titania and Shadow. Repeat all of IV. ending in doubles, turn and pose while chorus groups for song. (S for standing, Si for sitting, K for kneeling, P for prostrate.)

SSSS
SSSSSSSS
KK Si Si KK
P P

Page 16. During the last two phrases of song, "The forest shall conquer," chorus gradually fades away, moving off by side wings and up stage through gate. Song must die away in distance, and lights go down slowly, leaving stage at end of PROLOGUE as at the beginning. The four Principals slowly recede through gate, closing it slowly, and exeunt slowly, R and L, back of fence. Slow curtain.

Follow directions on musical score of Chorus strictly, for best effect. The duet may be sung by two good solo sopranos and two good altos. Try to have plenty of altos in the chorus.

If the characters are available, use the last episode, the passing of the mortals through the gate, with Titania's reentrance and line.

Act I — Pages 17–43

Banqueting Hall of Fitzwalter's Castle

The following enter R: *Marian, Little John.*

The following enter L: *Friar, Much, Robin Hood, Foresters, Widow Scarlet, Queen Elinor.*

The following enter C: *Fitzwalter, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, Gentlemen, Ladies, Sheriff* and his *Men, John* and his *Men.*

Costume changes from PROLOGUE: *Little John, Will Scarlet, Much, Fairies, Foresters,* if doubled.

There are many characters in this scene. Be careful to have the costumes in keeping with the color of the stage setting, and so to arrange the stage pictures that they are well balanced. Study the character of Shadow-of-a-Leaf to bring out his semi-serious, semi-whimsical traits. Play up the weakness of Fitzwalter.

Page 17. Robin enters L, vigorously.

Page 19. The Sheriff and his men must be seen in the doorway, C, but unobserved of those on stage. Robin should have the center of the stage during his long speech, which should be delivered with sincerity and feeling and should receive close attention by his hearers. Shadow should crouch on the floor until his lines, page 21.

Page 22. On Robin's lines he comes down stage, and raises his sword. All the men follow suit. Widow Scarlet enters L, and on her second speech kneels to Robin.

Page 24. Robin has one of his men take Widow aside when Sheriff enters C. All the men draw their swords as Sheriff comes down center and reads his proclamation. Create a well-balanced stage picture and practice the formation sufficiently so that it will be taken without confusion.

Page 25. Little John enters C, runs and kneels before Robin.

Pages 26, 27. If a secret door is impracticable, Robin should exit R. Marian enters through door down steps up R.

Page 27. Shadow should fall at Marian's feet, on his lines. Prince John and his Men enter C. Again work for a good stage picture.

Page 30. Fitzwalter leads his guests out C or, as indicated, up the steps from whence Marian entered. Pause before John speaks.

Page 33. Fitzwalter should enter unobserved. Marian's glance discloses him to John.

Page 35. John's Men should enter C. It should be clear that they did not join the guests. Robin's Men enter as indicated, up R.

Page 36. All the characters on this page exeunt C.

Pages 36, 37. The most effective treatment of this lighting situation is to employ a bunch light off stage, L, using greens and blues. As the other lights dim, gradually bring the bunch light on so as to project a stream of light on stage. Shadow goes out, C, to look, returns and points L, as Queen Elinor enters L. Shadow crouches by stairs.

Page 39. Fitzwalter enters C.

Pages 42, 43. Marian exits up stairs R, and Fitzwalter and Elinor follow her. Shadow, during this scene, has been watching them closely, and as they approach the steps he retreats. On their exeunt he drops to the floor by the steps and utters his lines piteously. Slow curtain.

Act II — Scene 1 — Pages 47–74

The Forest

The following enter R: *Little John, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, Friar, Widow, Jenny, Titania, Oberon, Orchis, Fairies, Blondel.*

The following enter L: *Much, Robin, Elinor, Foresters.*

Costume changes from Act I: *Marian, Elinor, Lords* and *Ladies,* if doubled.

Page 47. Much enters L.

Page 50. Robin enters L. Little John runs to him and feels of his body to see if he has been hurt.

Page 51. Little John aims his bow off, R. Shadow enters R.

Page 53. Marian enters R. Take time for her by-play. Make this scene sincere, not mawkish.

Page 55. Elinor enters L, unobserved.

Page 56. All characters on this page enter R. Elinor retreats.

Page 59. Marian exits into hut, as Elinor enters L.

Page 62. Robin pauses before his reply, "None." Marian reenters from hut. Robin's men enter from L back of hut and take Elinor off L.

Page 63. The Foresters may come in from all sides on bugle call. They seat themselves or lie about. Some stand. Seat the principals and study an effective stage picture. Jenny, Widow Scarlet, and Shadow should enter with them. Note that Little John takes the character of Greenleaf, page 64.

Page 65. Shadow may be picking these flowers during the scene. The lights should grow dimmer until the same poetic atmosphere is created as in the PROLOGUE.

Page 67. After Robin bids Marian good-night and throws himself by the door of the hut, a portion of the overture music may be played. The fairies do not enter formally, but in groups or individually, lightly, rhythmically.

Pages 67–70. It is impossible to create this entrance of Titania. The next best thing is to have her on stage in darkness, and on Shadow's lines to throw a flash or spot light on her. She enters R. Oberon also enters R and in the same fashion. Orchis simply comes out from the group, exits R as the fairies enter from all sides. A few may have entered as indicated, page 67, the rest at

this point. The music has been playing softly. It may now swell out, and the lights may come up slightly. Again strive for a beautiful stage picture.

Pages 71–74. The wailing is off R. It blends softly into the opening bars of Blondel's song. Use piano off stage. His first stanza is heard off stage R; the second just as he enters R, the orchestra taking up the music. The fairies retreat to one side L. When he passes through them and exits L, the fairies cross and mass themselves R, listening to the song trail off in the distance. Slow curtain.

Act II — Scene 2 — Pages 77–104

The Forest

The following enter R: *Sheriff* and his *men, Will Scarlet, Alan-a-Dale, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, John* and his *men.*

The following enter L: *Richard, Widow, Jenny, Marian, Robin.*

Persons on stage are *Little John, Much, Friar, Foresters.*

Costume changes from Act II, Scene 1: *Little John, Much, Friar, Foresters, Robin.*

Page 77. Robin enters L. His disguise,— costume, voice, and mannerism should be perfect.

Pages 79–84. The action of this scene needs thorough rehearsal. The Sheriff and some of his Men enter R, some off stage holding Will Scarlet. Robin and his Men are massed L. Robin's shooting, of course, is directed off stage, R, in the direction of Will Scarlet. On page 82 the Sheriff runs off R when one of his men is shot, and Will Scarlet runs on stage R. Page 83 is clear. Each director must work out his own problem of a stage fight. When the Knight enters, L, and forces his way into the fight, it must be at a stage when Robin's men seem to be getting the worst of it. He may appear on horseback, jump to the stage, and an attendant may take the bridle of the horse. If the horse will not stand still during the ensuing scuffle, he may be led aside and the sounds off

stage indicate that Robin has galloped off on it. The Sheriff and his Men are driven off R. Robin gallops off R. No evidences of the fight should remain as the rest of the crowd follow R. A slight pause may intervene before the entrance, L, of Jenny, Marian, and Widow.

Page 85. The hut to which Jenny takes the Widow may be off stage, L. Her next lines, obviously, are to Marian.

Page 87. The sound is off R, whence John and his Man enter.

Page 88. Marian has retreated L. Jenny goes off L, John's Man, R. In Jenny's speech change "that same" to "a."

Page 89. John does not see Jenny reenter, and slip to Marian a bow and arrow which she takes by putting her hand behind her.

Pages 90–94. This scene also needs particularly careful rehearsal. John's man reenters R. Jenny, page 90, steals back of him and pins his arms when he has seized Marian. The four struggle. John does not see Robin on his entrance, R. Marian had raised her arm to strike, but dropped it on John's line, "Come, strike!" John's men enter R. The two women retreat L during the fight. Bugle calls off L. The Knight enters, L, at the moment when John is about to stab Robin. Page 92, John retreats up C as Foresters enter on all sides. John is led off, L, and is brought back, L, and finally exits L.

Page 95. Foresters reappear L, with seats and with table set with viands, as indicated. This may already be set up. Marian and Jenny enter L.

Page 96. Friar, Will Scarlet, and Foresters enter R. Will Scarlet exits L, and reenters, page 98, L, with his mother, the Widow. Shadow enters R, page 98. The stage picture should place Marian, the Knight, and Robin up C, the rest massed on either side.

Page 103. Alan should come down stage for his song, during opening bars by orchestra. He should employ gestures to accentuate the song, should strum his harp, and

should include Shadow in his action so that at the end of the song, when Shadow approaches him, a tableau effect may be secured. Quick curtain.

Act III — Pages 107–153

Garden of The King's Palace

The following enter R: *Marian, Robin, Oberon, Blondel, Maskers, Lords, Ladies, John's men, Fitzwalter.*

The following enter L: *Elinor, Puck, Prince John, Shadow, Little John, Scarlet, Foresters, Friar, Much, Maskers, Lords, Ladies.*

Costume changes from Act II, Scene 2: *Marian, Robin, Much, Elinor, Little John, Will Scarlet, Lady, Foresters,* and *Fairies,* if doubled.

Page 107. John and Elinor enter up, L, and come down C.

Page 110. Marian and Robin enter R, as John and Elinor go off L, watching them.

Page 113. After Robin exits down R, Marian stands watching him a moment, then runs after him calling "Robin" several times.

Page 114. Puck and Shadow enter down L. They chase each other a moment, then sit down on the ground.

Page 116. They hide, R, and Scarlet and Little John enter down L.

Page 117. Shadow had come out on previous page, and Puck comes out when the Foresters exeunt down L.

Page 118. By this time the lights should be gradually lowered, using greens and blues to indicate the transition from sunset to night. A spot light may be judiciously used on Oberon's entrance down R.

Page 121. The text from here to page 127 is omitted. Shadow and Oberon exeunt up R. Shadow may go on the line, "Quickly, come quickly." After their exeunt, the lanterns may be lowered from the flies into view, page 128, as John enters R and Elinor enters L. During this scene the music of the Gavotte may be played softly, the

strings in the orchestra playing pizzicato. The orchestra may be off stage. It comes out full for the dance, page 130. The Maskers, during this dialogue, come and go on the raised platform back of the balustrade.

Page 128. Marian and Fitzwalter are pacing up R. John goes to them, as a Lord and Lady separate from the others and come down C. Elinor joins other Maskers.

Page 130. John and Marian come down C. Fitzwalter, after his lines, joins the Maskers. The Maskers now take positions for the Gavotte as the music comes out full. Those who do not dance may be stationed on the seats or back of the balustrade to make an effective grouping.

The directions for the Gavotte follow:

Four couples across stage. Gentlemen bring ladies to places, and all courtesy.

I. Face forward.

a. Step outside foot, throw inside across in front.

b. *Chasse,* beginning inside (slide, close, slide). *Chasse* outside, point inside foot and hold one count.

c. Beginning inside foot, three walking steps and point. Outside foot and three walking steps and point inside foot. Repeat all of I. Finish facing partners.

II. Moving back stage.

a. Cross outside, foot back, inside foot side, outside foot cross forward and point inside foot. Repeat starting inside (moving forward stage). Repeat again right and left.

b. Lady walks with eight small steps in a circle around partner, and all courtesy (sixteen counts), finishing with back to audience in a row.

III. Hands held shoulder height, beginning in a row in back, repeat all of II. Finish, facing

forward, and from beginning repeat all of I, II, and III.

Page 131. During the dance Robin totters in down R, unobserved, and seats himself on a seat just visible to the audience. Arthur's part may be taken by the player of Much, who enters L, but sees Robin just as the dance ceases and the Maskers retire up stage and resume their pacing. During this dialogue the music may continue softly as on page 127, stopping on page 133 on Robin's last word, "Yes."

Pages 134, 135. Break the Maskers up into quick, excited groups. Arthur runs off L and brings Marian. John finds Elinor and engages her in conversation.

Page 136. Marian goes R. John appears in the opening of the balustrade on the platform for his announcement. Elinor goes off L. Be sure to secure a well-balanced stage of the Maskers, and a quick readjustment of positions on page 137 when Robin strikes John. The music of Blondel's song must begin in the orchestra on Robin's words, "Back, fools!" All listen intently to the song in the distance. The first two stanzas are off stage.

Page 138. Robin's exit down R must be made under the cover of the Maskers' intent listening to the song.

Pages 138, 139. The third stanza is sung as Blondel comes on stage. He enters up R on the platform back of the balustrade. After the Maskers shout "Dead!" Blondel continues his way and passes off L, repeating the last stanza, the Maskers watching him. Then John speaks. The Maskers then run out in all directions, mostly R. The lights in the lanterns may be extinguished and the stage be lighted for moonlight as before; that is, the lights are retained as changed on page 118.

Page 143. The scene is continuous to this page. When the Maskers exeunt, Much and Little John as First and Second Forester, enter down L.

Page 144. Marian appears down R, looking all about her, does not see the men at first. Friar Tuck enters L,

stating "I've sent Will Scarlet to Kirklee Priory." Robin enters up R and drops on the same seat as in the previous scene.

Page 146. Marian merely seats herself by his side. The text here is cut out to page 152. On his last lines, page 146, Robin tries to rise, and, as indicated, page 152, "Flings up his arms and falls fainting." Scarlet, the Messenger, enters down L.

Pages 152, 153. Little John takes the lines of the Forester. The Foresters lead Robin off L, Little John conducting Marian off L after them. Quick curtain.

The Epilogue — Pages 154–169

The Priory and the Forest

As stated, stage for EPILOGUE must be set up just as for THE PROLOGUE. Down stage, as indicated on diagram, set up a plain interior to resemble a Priory. A bunch light should stand L to indicate sunset through casement window. On death of Robin Hood, while orchestra is playing, drop curtain a few seconds while *The Priory* set is struck, to reveal *The Forest.* The stage men must move it quickly. Do not turn on the house lights. If there are sufficient stage men, the stage lights can all be thrown off, the set may be moved in the dark, and the curtain need not drop. This will produce a better effect, since the lights disclosing the forest in moonlight may come gradually on. The lights revealing Fairyland up stage should come up later. However, if the curtain is lowered, the scene should show Shadow-of-a-Leaf standing in the gate. The music should change to his song. With spot light on him, he should sing song, gradually working down stage to bodies of Robin and Marian lying unmoved, and kneel. Fairies enter gates, and circle about the bodies (see p. 164), exeunt through gates. Oberon and Titania remain at gates, and close them on Shadow.

The following enter R: *Marian, Shadow.*

The following enter L: *Elinor, Robin.*

The *Fairies* and *Foresters* enter R and L.

On stage are the *Prioress* and the *Novice*.

Costume changes from Act III are the *Lady* to the *Prioress, Widow Scarlet* to the *Novice, Elinor, Marian, Lords, Ladies.*

Pages 154, 155. A knock at the door is heard, L, which calls for the Prioress's "Who's that?" The Novice exits L, and returns at once. Of course Elinor enters L, and the Novice retires L.

Page 157. After the bell ceases tolling, the chanting of the Miserere to organ accompaniment off stage should begin, and keep up until the entrance of Robin Hood. A few girls garbed as nuns can create the illusion of many nuns passing by the window on the way to chapel, by passing and repassing. The bunch light showing sunset (ambers and reds), may gradually change to moonlight, the necessary lighting for *The Forest* scene back stage, by blending greens and blues, and gradually withdrawing the ambers and reds. The Novice exits L, the Prioress, R. Robin enters L, unattended. He has bow and arrows, and bugle, which he drops to the floor at sight of Elinor.

Pages 159, 160. The Prioress enters and exits R. The Miserere may be chanted again while Elinor is lancing the arm of Robin. Marian enters R. The music continues up to Robin's bugle calls.

Page 160. Elinor stabs Marian with a dagger and exits L.

Page 161. Shadow enters R and exits R. If possible let him climb in and exit by the casement.

Page 162. After Robin's bugle call, and the faint ones from the forest, and the Foresters' knocks on the two doors, R and L, the music ceases, the nuns run to and fro outside the casement, and the Foresters, with loud cries, rush in by way of the two doors.

Page 164. After Robin shoots his arrow through the casement, the music to accompany Robin's death begins, continues during change of scene, and then merges into

Shadow's song. After his exit through the casement he merely goes up stage and takes his place at the gates of the fence until the Priory set is removed. Little John places Robin's body by the side of Marian's body, and when the scene changes to *The Forest* scene, as indicated, their bodies are still lying as placed, but now as if transported to the forest. Shadow, still singing, comes down stage to the bodies, and kneels. The Fairies throng in on all sides up stage and through the gates, and circle about the bodies, extending their arms to them as if to take them with them, symbolizing, in fact, that they do carry their spirits off to Fairyland. They exeunt through the gates and off R and L. Shadow finishes his song, and drops prostrate by the bodies.

Pages 168, 169. Titania and Oberon appear at the gates. Use spot light. They come down stage for their dialogue, and return to the gates and close them behind them on Oberon's last lines, page 169. Meanwhile, Shadow is still kneeling over the bodies of Robin and Marian, and the Fairies are softly singing their song in the distance. As the gates close, Shadow starts up, runs and throws himself against the gates as indicated, page 169. The music dies away. Oberon and Titania exeunt R. The spot light is retained on Shadow, softened, and the other lights are subdued. Slow curtain.

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